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Class Relations and the policies
of the Communist Party of South Africa
1921-1950

Thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology, for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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JONATHAN GROSSMAN

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Summary.

The Communist Party(CP) was formed in 1921, on the foundation created by the International Socialist League(ISL). An investigation of the theory and practice of the CP reveals the combination of a socialist commitment with an abstract theoretical perspective. The Party was obstructed, through its own idealised understanding of class relations, from pursuing its declared goals. This study investigates the rhythms of struggle and the dynamic development of the workers' movement. It examines the growing social weight and developing structural strength of black workers and the organisation and action which these generated. CP policies are examined in the light of these developments.

Oppression which spans different classes created the underlying basis for a class alliance between the oppressed black petty bourgeoisie and exploited and oppressed black workers. The CP tended to conflate a co-incidence of different processes of radicalisation and different class interests. The Party broke from the white labour tradition out of which it had emerged; it pursued a policy of popular frontism for much of its history. This policy, and the conflation of different processes and class interests promoted an uncertainty within the Party as to its role. On this basis, the Party did not always identify underlying processes, and hence its uncertainty as to how to relate to the dynamic processes of radicalisation, organisation and action, and the ebbs and flows of the class struggle was promoted. In 1950, the Party responded to the threat of state banning, and, at a time when working class combativity was developing, it disbanded. In the period under study, the goal of working class leadership in an organised class alliance was not achieved.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

AAC	All-African Convention
ADP	African Democratic Party
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union
AFTU	African Federation of Trade Unions
AMWU	African Mine Workers' Union
ANC	African National Congress
AP	Afrikaner Party
APO	African People's Organisation
CP or CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
CNETU	Council of Non-European Trade Unions (after 1941: Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions)
CYL	Congress Youth League
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
FAC	Franchise Action Committee/Council
FNETU	Federation of Non-European Trade Unions
GWU	Garment Workers' Union
GNP	Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party
HNP	Herenigde Nasionale Party
IANC	Independent African National Congress
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa
ISL	International Socialist League
IWA	Industrial Workers of Africa
JPC	Joint Planning Commission
LP or SALP	South African Labour Party
MWU	South African Mineworkers' Union

NEUF	Non-European United Front
NEUM	or Unity Movement
	Non-European Unity Movement
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NNC	Natal Native Council
NO	Nuwe Orde
NP	National(ist) Party
NRC	Natives' Representative Council
NURAHs	National Union of Railway and Harbour Servants
PTU	Progressive Trade Union Group
SA	South Africa
SAAEO	South African Association of Employees' Organisations
SAFTU	South African Federation of Trade Unions
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAIF	South African Industrial Federation
SAIRR, IRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAP	South African Party
SARHWU	South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union
SATLC, TLC	South African Trades and Labour Council
SAW	South African Worker
SWA	South West Africa
Umteteli	Umteteli wa Bantu
TNC	Transvaal Native Congress
TOB	Transkei Organised Bodies
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UP	United Party

Note on terminology

At its conference in 1923, the South African Native National Congress changed its name to the African National Congress. At the same conference, the resolutions refer to Bantu, Natives, Non-Europeans and Africans. At its 1929 conference, the CP adopted the slogan calling for a Native Republic. At different times, this was called a Black Republic. A resolution from the Executive Committee of the Comintern spoke of the "negro population", "a black country", and "the native workers". In 1934, Umsebenzi asked: "'Native', 'Bantu' or 'African'? - What shall we call ourselves?" The article suggested that instead of a Native Republic, the CP slogan should have been for "'a Bantu Republic' or possibly 'an African Republic'". It concluded: "For the present Umsebenzi will continue to use all three words, Native, African and Bantu, until such time as agreement is reached by the advanced section of blacks [sic] themselves."

In 1936, the All African Convention faced the same issue. The conference minutes record that "[d]uring the discussions, a rather novel idea of designating Europeans in South Africa was mooted.... One delegate.... urged the Convention in all sincerity to adopt the nomenclature of 'Non-Africans' for all Europeans as distinct from Africans". I have used the nomenclature "black", to refer to those who were known as "African", "Indian", "Coloured", collectively and separately. In the great majority of cases, the part of the black population with which this study is concerned is the majority of the working class and oppressed people which is subject to the Pass Laws. For clarity, I have been obliged to use "African", "Indian" and "Coloured" where the context might otherwise create confusion about which section of the black population is being referred to.

At times I have used quotations whose language reflects the class, race or gender prejudices of the people from whom the quotes come. I hope that nothing which I have said myself uses terms which are not acceptable to exploited and oppressed people.

INTRODUCTION

In 1921, the Manifesto of the newly-formed Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA/CP) declared:

"The Communist Party of South Africa makes its appeal to all South Africa workers, organised and unorganised, white and black, to join in promoting the **overthrow of the capitalist system and outlawry of the capitalist class**, and the establishment of a **Commonwealth of Workers** throughout the World."

The Manifesto went on to discuss the Social Revolution, and to attack bourgeois governments. It continued:

"It is time for the Labour Movement in South Africa to hearken to the call of the times, to discard its futile reformism, its misleaders' careerism, its petty middle class opportunism, its subservient snobbery and cowardice, of the past - all typical of the 'social patriotic' Second International which failed the workers so miserably at the outbreak of the great war, and which is even now being rehashed as the '2 1/2 International'. It is time to recognise the historic and titanic nature of the fight and to unite all our forces in countering the enemy's palpable activity with even more active **Red forward movement, political and industrial**, of all the workers; a Great Push so

militant, well organised and unified by solidarity as to deliver, in co-operation with the advanced Labour Movement of the rest of the world, the knock-out blow to a hated class and system. To this standard the United Communist Party of S.A. bids all class conscious workers rally

"For the immediate future, indeed, the main duty of the party and of every member of it is to establish the widest and closest possible contact with workers of all ranks and races and to propagate the Communist gospel among them.... But propaganda 'is not enough' ... and the Party will be alert to turn to the advantage of the Labour Movement wherever possible any phase of discontent or disaffection, any opposition to imperialism, any indignation at the 'skiet skiet' native policy, any genuine revolt of the masses against tyranny; striving always to hasten, sharpen and shorten the inevitable conflict, to guide and inspire the struggling workers in times of stress and trial like the present, and generally to act as the revolutionary vanguard of the Labour army of South Africa."¹

In 1950, a decision of the Central Committee of the CPSA dissolved the organisation. A Central Committee Statement declared:

"COMMUNISM AND SOCIALISM HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME. FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS IN ONE COUNTRY AFTER ANOTHER, THE ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE HAVE RUTHLESSLY, INHUMANLY, SOUGHT TO CRUSH THE MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC LIBERATION, FOR THE

END OF THE CLASS WAR, FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM.

All those attempts have failed. Communism lives on, gaining in strength and stature. Rooted in the history of the working class, expressing their deepest aspirations and needs, Communism can not be destroyed as long as society is divided into two worlds: rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed."²

This study aims to develop an analytical understanding of the politics of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA/CP), in the period from its formation to its dissolution. It attempts to explain the way in which the CPSA understood and related to the political dynamic of developing class relations. I will be seeking to demonstrate that, from its inception, the CP viewed and related to developments through an idealised, abstract theoretical perspective. This perspective both formed, and distorted, the Party's understanding of the political processes and developments which it sought to influence; hence its capacity to affect the course of events in accordance with its declared goals was undermined.

Several analyses have illuminated aspects of the issues with which this study is concerned. Central amongst these have been the studies by CP members - Lerumo³, Simons and Simons,⁴ and Bunting;⁵ the work of Roux;⁶ unpublished theses by Brookes⁷ and Johns⁸ and Southall;⁹ and papers by Hirson¹⁰ and Legassick.¹¹ All these

studies contain a wealth of empirical information. There is a consistent tendency in the studies by CP members to emphasise what are seen as the Party's contributions to the national liberation and class struggles. The study by Legassick involves a theoretical consideration of the concept "nation" which is examined against his own theoretical understanding of nationalism and the national question. The points at which all these studies are most illuminating, as far as providing an **explanation** of the theoretical perspective and policies of the CP is concerned, is where they examine the CP in the context of the class society and class forces within which it operated. Drawing from the possible approaches suggested by the existing literature, I have attempted to pursue this latter approach, employing a methodology which situates the CP, and explains its policies, within the context of the social processes to which it sought to relate. From this starting point, this study seeks to present a general understanding of the development of the political relations between classes in the period under consideration, and, on that basis, to investigate the policies of the CP.

The massive upsurge of the workers' struggle in South Africa has given rise to and been reflected in the development of Marxist, neo-Marxist, revisionist or radical class analysis of South African society. The starting point of the analyses however has not always been the dynamics of the workers' struggle. The more recent pioneers of a class analysis, notably Legassick,¹² Wolpe¹³ and Johnstone,¹⁴ have tended to take as their starting point the liberal obfuscation of the dynamics of South African society. Their central concern has been to explain racial division as the product of class society. They have explained and stressed its rationality and functionalism in capitalist terms, as against the liberal analysis which has categorised the racism in South African society as an irrational aberration which has obstructed capitalist profit-making, and, according to some analysts, will be removed by the natural processes of capitalist development. Because of their starting point, these class analyses have inevitably overlooked or ignored aspects of the dynamics of the class society whose existence they have established. They have pointed to working class resistance, but their cut-off point has tended to be the point at which the value, to capital, of social developments, has been revealed and explained.

In the course of the 1970's, a school of analysis, based on the analytical approaches of Althusser and Poulantzas developed.¹⁵ This school took relations between different fractions of capital as the focal point of their analysis. Their approach has been dealt with in critiques by Clarke,¹⁶ and Innes and Plaut,¹⁷ and will be considered at different points in the course of the text. In

summary, because of the perspective on political developments which they employed, the fractionalists either overlooked, oversimplified, or distorted what was happening inside the working class, and the dynamics of the class struggle. The class struggle tended to be analytically reduced to a secondary role, after the struggle between different fractions within the ruling class. Political developments were explained as the result of that intra-class struggle. To the extent that they are considered at all, workers tend to become the passive objects of historical developments whose course has been decided by the struggle for hegemony within the ruling class. The fractionalist approach, which, as Clarke has explained, operates at the level of appearances, was developed at a time when, at that level, the South Africa state appeared to be all-powerful. O'Meara, explicitly seeking to move beyond the limitations of a fractionalist perspective, has provided an exceptionally illuminating understanding of the development of Afrikaner nationalism.¹⁸ This study draws from O'Meara's analysis. But it is concerned to address an issue outside his focus: the effect of Communist policies on the struggle for the political leadership of white workers. If there was a growing determination amongst sections of the white working class, and unskilled Afrikaans workers in particular, to change the conditions under which they lived and worked, why was that expressed in support for Nationalism, rather than in the growing influence of the Communists among Afrikaans workers?

As the workers' struggle began to reach historically new levels in the course of the 1970's and 1980's, two analytical approaches came to dominate:- the labour process approach,¹⁹ and the approach of the social historians.²⁰ In the early part of the same period, as the trade union movement developed, there was also a tendency to portray the history of the class struggle as the history of the rise and fall of trade unions.²¹ In the way in which they were developed, these approaches all had the value, as against the fractionalists, of recognising that workers are historical actors in the making of their own history. The work developed within the framework of these approaches has illuminated aspects of developing class relations. In each case, however, the analytical perspective involves a limitation on a broader understanding of the dynamics of the class struggle. The concentration on trade unions has automatically excluded the majority of the working class - the non-unionised workers. It has also tended to take, as its starting point, the existence or absence of unions, without investigating the processes by which the receptivity amongst workers to class organisation more generally is developed or suppressed.

The social historians have provided invaluable, vivid pictures of the immediate realities of working class life and struggle. But the analytical perspective tends to limit the vision of particular struggles to the immediate. The way in which those struggles are to be situated within the broader struggle of the working class as a whole remains an analytical task which the social history itself does not undertake. Additionally, there is

a tendency to focus on visible action, without an equivalent illumination of underlying processes - or of periods of inaction.

The value of the labour process approach has most recently been revealed in the excellent study by Jon Lewis.²² The study seeks to explain organisational and political developments amongst a specific part of the working class - the white workers. In doing so, the approach demonstrates its twofold limitations:- too much causal weight is attached to a single process - changes in the labour process; and the workers' movement is reduced to the organised workers. Lewis points to the latter as a restriction within his study; it is, in fact, a limitation imposed by the method itself. It excludes a proper investigation of non-unionised workers, employed and unemployed. Similarly, the approach excludes an investigation of the impact of living conditions and "community issues". Not only are these central parts of the broader political process, they also play a central role in the way in which workers perceive what is happening, and act, at the workplace. Some of the most illuminating parts of Lewis's work are where he moves beyond the immediate limitations of his hypothesis, and explains developments by taking account of a much broader range of factors than the causality attached to changes in the labour process actually allows.²³ It is not, then, simply a case of extending his theoretical perspective to something else - it becomes a question of changing the perspective.

In approaching the two major tasks which this study undertakes -

the exposition of a broad understanding of the development of class relations, and an analysis of the way in which the CP understood and related to these - I have made extensive use of the Party's view of the development of the political process, and of its own history. In addition to the major works by Party members already mentioned, the numerous editorial notes in the documentary history recently published by the Party combine to provide an historical overview.²⁴ With the exception of Simons and Simons, these works are all published by the Party and constitute official histories. The work by Simons and Simons is not an official Party history. But its authors were leading Party members, and the work is a reflection of the thinking of individuals in that position. The authors of these works are collectively referred to as "the Party historians".

The official Party histories all reflect a primary concern to portray what are seen as the strengths and contributions of the Party. The study by Simons and Simons, while reflecting a similar concern, tends to investigate developments in greater depth. In doing so, they reveal a vision of historical developments which is common to all the Party historians. This is clearly manifested in a comment they make about the dissolution of the CPSA in 1950: "In the hour of dissolution as a legal party, the communists could claim the achievement of an objective that had been central to their purpose since 1928. The class struggle had merged with the struggle for national liberation."²⁵ Through the perspective of the CP historians, the struggle comes to be viewed as the process of progress towards the historical destination - the alliance

between the ANC and the CP - the organisational and political embodiment of the revolutionary alliance between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie, and of the fact that the national liberation struggle and the class struggle have become the same thing. In the course of that process, class differences become less important than differences between "conservatives" and "radicals"; and the different and dynamic class bases of radicalism are submerged beneath a vision of the oppressed people. There is a pervasive tendency to abstract and hypostatise historical cases of radicalism from the conditions in which they develop,²⁶ and to see an increasingly radical continuum, along which the black petty bourgeoisie moves, towards its part in achieving "the objective which had been central to their purpose since 1928."²⁷

It is inevitable, in the history of an organisation which has the goals of the CP, that political choices should be opened up before the Party, and that decisions taken should not always prove to be the best possible. The way in which Simons and Simons portray the history of the CP reflects the same vision of the historical destination of the Party. The "good periods" of the Party are understood primarily in terms of whether it is developing a closer alliance with the organised black petty bourgeoisie. The "bad periods" are when it is not pursuing that alliance. Party historians identify clear cases in the period under discussion where, in their judgement, the International Socialist League (ISL) or the CP followed the wrong course. The

first, before the formation of the CP, was when the ISL failed to recognise the progressive nature of African nationalism. The second was in the period 1929-33 when a "dogmatic sectarian tendency" prevailed within the Party and the international Communist movement.²⁸ The third was in the period following the break with sectarianism, in which there was what is seen as a naive belief that an alliance, ranging from the rank and file Afrikaner nationalist to the mass of black workers, could be constructed.²⁹ The final problem is identified in the Party's decision to disband - a decision which is criticised as expressing a "tendency towards legalistic illusions".³⁰

The Party historians all explain each of the problems, which they have collectively identified, by one or more of three different approaches. The first is a simple distortion, of which there is an example in the documentary history. The impression is conveyed that the Party opposed the industrial colour bar at the time of the 1922 strike.³¹ Slovo, in a study of the tactics of the national liberation struggle, conveys the impression that the Party was disbanded directly by the Suppression of Communism Act.³² The second approach is an individualisation of political processes. The problem in the third period becomes the problem of the individuals who controlled the Party in that period.³³ The problem of the naivety which followed the third period becomes the problem of Hardy, who was advising the Party in that period. And the third approach is to remain at the level of description, without seeking to explain what is being described. So, for

example, there is an identification of legalistic illusions behind the decision of the Party leadership to disband the organisation, but there is no substantive attempt made to analyse the illusions and seek to explain their origins.

Permeating the work of the Party historians is a tendency which is reflected, both in different analyses dealing with and touching upon the CP, and in the noticeably limited extent of such work. The full dynamic of political decisions and political choices is lost sight of. There is a strong tendency towards a determinist reduction of the subjective as an active part of the political process. Decisions which are taken, explicable by the circumstances, are seen and portrayed as if they were inevitable because of the circumstances. This is one factor contributing to something of a veil around the CP and its policies - which have not been subjected to the same historical scrutiny as have the activities and policies of other political organisations. It is as if there is an assumption that the CP represented and embodied what Communists sought to represent and embody - the consistent expression of the interests of the working class. There is an associated tendency to see political choices, and political decisions, actually being made only where the decision seems, to the analyst, to be wrong. In this study I seek to examine the questions which the work of the CP historians have raised, but not adequately answered. Why was it that Communists believed in the industrial colour bar? How was it that Bach and Wolton were able to dominate the Party in the third period? Why was there a harsh sectarian spirit - why did the Communists not resist it?

Why did the Party not enlighten Hardy? Why did they accept his vision? Where did the legalistic illusions, reflected in the decision to disband, originate? What were the underlying continuities between the apparently different political approaches of the Party in different periods?

A central part of this study is the assessment of two major subjective processes:- the rise and fall of working class combativity; and the political analysis and policy decisions of the CP. Different analysts, dealing with similar issues to those with which this study is concerned have pointed to the need for a materialist understanding of the subjective, and the problems posed by an idealisation of the working class, and the assumption of complete freedom for political leaders to make choices.³⁴ Fine points to "a big danger which must be avoided but which has plagued many a 'left' analysis. It is taken for granted that the masses (or the working class) are always militant, raring to fight, full of the most advanced revolutionary ideas, capable of overcoming all opposition - were it not for the betrayal of a renegade leadership." He points to a range of objective constraints on what is politically possible, in any set of circumstances. He goes on to argue that recognition of such constraints should not lead to an imbalanced analysis which excludes "the subjective element, the element of will and self-consciousness".³⁵ A materialist analysis requires that the working class is not a-historically abstracted from the conditions of its existence in relation to capital. As far as the conceptualisation of the working class is concerned, a starting point of the perspective which I am employing regards it as essential to class society that the basic contradiction between capital and labour not only exists, but will be expressed in conflict. That starting point is in itself the product of a conception of the working class in its relation to capital. It is because of the oppressive conditions created by the process of capital accumulation under

which the majority of the working class lives, and the exploitative relationship embodied in that process of accumulation, that the struggle of workers arises in the first place. As has been pointed out, this does not mean that workers are all always ready to struggle. But it does mean that the basis upon which a spontaneous receptivity to organisation and action recurrently develops, is always present. The fact that the working class does not exist independently of capital means, amongst other things, that a variety of measures will be employed by the state to seek to ensure that the conditions for continued capital accumulation are maintained -i.e to make sure that the working class as a whole is prevented from responding to the conditions which capitalism imposes upon it, or that the response is contained, or channelled in a way which does not threaten the existence of capitalist relations of production. The measures taken by the state, however, can not remove but, rather, maintain the basic contradiction, and therefore the consistent basis for class struggle and organisation. In particular conditions in the historical process, the measures taken by the state serve, in fact, to promote struggle and organisation.

As well as a consideration of the basic relationship of conflict between capital and labour, this study is also concerned with the relationship between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class, and, in particular, the oppressed black petty bourgeoisie and black workers. At different points in its history, the CPSA identified both the fact that oppression extended to more than

one class;³⁶ and the fact that the interests of different oppressed classes were not always the same.³⁷ The orthodox position which the Party shared with the Communist movement historically was to call for a class alliance, under the leadership of the working class.³⁸ The fact that the Party itself did not always pursue that orthodox position will be discussed at different points in the text. Its departures took two different forms: either, as in the third period, an effective dismissal of the fact that oppression extended to different classes; or, as in the popular front period, a tendency to submerge an understanding of class differences beneath the identification of a common oppression. The point of departure for this study is the recognition that oppression spans different classes; the fact that black workers and the black petty bourgeoisie are both oppressed, and the fact that the living standards of large parts of the black petty bourgeoisie are similar to those of millions of black workers, provide the objective basis for an alliance between the two classes. But it can not be assumed that that basis is automatically or consistently translated into an actual alliance between the two classes; nor that any alliance which does emerge will perfectly reflect the interests of both classes. To make either such assumption reflects an a-historical approach, in which the subjective expression and organisation of class interests is conceptually reduced to the objective basis for a class alliance.

A similar reductionism, in the actual course of events with which this study is concerned, was applied at a different point by

Sidney Bunting, a leading figure in the formation of both the International Socialist League (ISL) and the CP, and one-time editor of the *International*.³⁹ He was clearly an individual with a profound socialist commitment. His contributions to the Party journal reflect a deeply-felt socialist humanism. He also provides an example of a case in which individual commitment and morality are not based on a dialectical materialist foundation. In the context of the 1920 strike of black miners, this leads to a degree of negativism because the strike did not conform to an abstract, idealised vision of "proper class consciousness".⁴⁰ In the context of the 1922 white miners' strike, the same combination of socialist commitment and idealism leads him to an idealist reduction of the subjective element - the consciousness and ideas of the leaders and rank and file - to a part of the objective basis of the strike - the defence of jobs and wages.⁴¹ In both cases, although the idealism leads to different results, an abstract perspective produces a failure to understand the concrete dynamics of the struggle, and hence undermines the possibility of relating successfully to it, in terms of declared goals. Notwithstanding a deep socialist commitment and a personal loathing of racism, Bunting does not see that the black workers fighting one of the most important strikes in South African history are part of the workers' movement; and he ends up supporting the racist industrial colour bar, and arguing that black workers should do the same.

The example of Bunting illuminates the two ways in which idealism

can operate. An idealist approach can effectively ignore the subjective as a factor in the historical process, analytically reducing it to a mirror image of part of what is seen as the objective situation. In this way, the product of idealism coincides with that of a vulgar, non-dialectical materialism. Or idealism can ignore part of the objective situation, analytically reducing it to a mirror image of the subjective.

A materialist understanding of the subjective not only guards against the idealism which assumes that workers are waiting, as an immediately revolutionary mass; or that workers are a passive mass which must be 'awakened' by their leaders. It must also be deployed against the idealism of the viewpoints which isolate misconceptions, or backwardness amongst workers as if these also exist independently of capital; or an idealism which understands the meaning of what workers do simply in terms of what those workers think. A part of the struggle of the working class has been, and is, the struggle to overcome the ideological as well as the physical controls of capital. Just as the dynamics of the struggle for ideas should not be idealised, so the actual struggles against exploitation and oppression which do occur should not be understood simply or primarily in terms of the thinking of those who undertake the struggle. The social meanings of ideas, which are social products, can not not be reduced to their formal content alone, but have to be explained and understood in terms of their meaning within the dynamics of the class society in which they exist. This study does not rely, for an understanding of state policy, simply on what is being said

within the ruling class and the government. Nor is the role of the petty bourgeoisie understood on the basis of its political declarations. In the same way, it does not operate in terms of the belief that because the CP declares a wish to be the expression of the interests of the working class, it does so as successfully as objective conditions allow. If the working class can not be understood in abstraction from the conditions of its existence, neither can the CP. I have tried to approach the study of the CP using the same theoretical perspective through which other political organisations and processes have been investigated. The Party is viewed, not a priori as the expression of the will of the working class, but as a political organisation, with declared socialist goals, seeking to influence the social processes in the context of which it exists.

In pursuing the analytical objectives of this study, I seek to avoid the problems identified above. The approach rests very heavily upon interpretation. This is necessarily so. There are no absolutely clear, unambiguous indicators which are immediate reflections of the subjective. Even the meaning of what historical actors say they think has to be interpreted, before its social meaning can be understood. Nor is the range of objective political choices always obvious - especially where the choices actually taken appear inevitable in the circumstances. As far as the mood of the working class is concerned, there are a range of indicators which have been used in the course of the study. A rise or fall in the level of action; the articulation of

new demands; the development of new organisations; the decline of existing organisations; the revitalisation of old organisations; the payment and non-payment of taxes; strike action or the absence of strike action; these, amongst others, are indicators of development within the working class. But the question of what precisely they mean in a particular situation is a matter of interpretation. So, for example, a rise in the level of union membership can, at one stage, be the indicator of a developing combativity. That is what happened towards the end of the 1930's.⁴² At another stage, combativity can be rising while union membership is falling, as happened at the end of the 1940's.⁴³ It is possible to empirically identify the rise and fall in the levels of membership. But each such movement is the product of an underlying process, in motion before its results become empirically obvious. The 1942/43 strikes, for example, are empirical indicators of an upsurge of workers' militancy. But the process creating that upsurge, and the stage of its development when the strikes occurred, is less easily identifiable. A range of mediating factors will affect the way in which workers perceive and respond to developments and experiences. It is the dynamism of this process of mediation which means that workers can respond to the defeat of one strike with a retreat from action, and the defeat of another with increased combativity; or to one police raid with apparent fear, and another with a "riot". The interpretation of how events like the 1942/43 strikes fit into the overall dynamic of the development of the workers' movement and class relations, and an attempt to situate such events within a theorised understanding of phases of struggle, forms a

major part of this study.

As the investigation will demonstrate, there are no a-historical rules or precise timetables according to which the workers' struggle moves. Nor did the CP always respond in the same way to apparently similar developments. Groups of workers have struggled in times of economic crisis and in periods of capitalist expansion; in expanding industries and contracting industries; at times when real wages were increasing, and at times when they were declining; in "favourable" employment conditions, and at times when unemployment was an immediate and mounting threat. At different times, different groups of workers have stood at the fore of the class struggle - not necessarily those with jobs, or with skills, or with the most developed political consciousness, or the best organised. Defeats have sometimes been met with an escalation of action, and have sometimes served to force back the movement of struggle. The CP has, at different times, supported objectively racist demands,⁴⁴ and campaigned against racism. It has seen the same Labour Party at one point as part of the labour movement⁴⁵ and, at another, as outside the labour movement.⁴⁶ It has responded to some strikes by seeking to obstruct them⁴⁷ and to others by seeking to promote them.

No perspective can succeed in explaining such varied developments if it hypostatizes causality. The attempt throughout is to understand and portray the subjective as part of a dynamic process, in concrete historical conditions. The consciousness of

workers is not measured according to an a-historical idealised conception of "pure class consciousness", but in terms of its actual meaning in the context of the class struggle in which it exists. The process by which particular decisions are arrived at -whether by workers or the CP - is portrayed and understood as a dynamic process, undertaken by human actors, with circumscribed but real historical options. The objective constraints in any specific situation are themselves seen as the historical product of dynamic social processes. The attempt throughout is to uncover and illuminate concrete historical processes and historical options within those processes. The range of options with which this study is concerned are those which analysis reveals actually existed. So, for example, this study views the support of the CP for the industrial colour bar in the 1922 strike as an explicable, but not inevitable, political choice. The CP history which suggests that the Party pursued a different policy reveals, in the process, that such an option existed. But the option did not exist only in ex post facto analysis, but also in the concrete political conditions which existed at the time. The different interpretations and responses to the Black Republic Programme also reveal the range of concrete possibilities which existed, and were manifested, at the time. The possibility of promoting and building a strike movement was demonstrated during the war years by the action of thousands of workers, although it was not the political option chosen by the CP.

The study is concerned to illuminate those, and other, historical options and choices, because their existence was part of the

reality of a dynamic political process to which the CP related and in which it participated. These historical options underline the fact that CP policies were political choices, explicable but not inevitable in the circumstances. It is not the concern of the study, however, to move beyond that to the different issue of suggesting what should have happened. Nor is it the concern of this study to examine how far different courses could have been developed, or what would have happened along the way.

On the basis of the different points raised above, this study seeks to provide an analysis, in an actual historical process, of the broad rhythms of the workers' struggle, and the political development of class relations. On the basis of this understanding, the way in which the CP understood and related to political developments is investigated. This thesis represents the **conclusions** of a process of investigation in which I have attempted to employ a methodology sufficiently flexible to take account of the factors discussed above, and consistently rigid in the understanding that workers are oppressed and exploited human subjects, actors in the course of the dynamic process of their own struggle. In the presentation of my conclusions, I have tried to retain enough theory to make clear the operation of the perspective, and enough history to demonstrate the capacity of the theoretical approach to uncover and illuminate the aspects of the historical process which it seeks to explain. While not seeking to provide a comprehensive history of the class struggle, the workers' movement, or the CP, I believe that this study

employs a methodology in investigating and seeking to explain aspects of each of these, which provides the basis for further study in areas which this exposition neglects.

This study covers a defined historical period and is concerned with historical processes in that period. Its concern is to illuminate the general way in which the CP saw and responded to political developments. In pursuing that concern, the understanding of the political development of class relations has not moved beyond an attempt to capture the general dynamic of those developments in which the response of the CP is being considered. I have generally focussed on developments in the urban areas of the Transvaal because these are the "power-houses" of the country. Developments in the rural areas have been specifically focussed upon only where they are especially important to understanding the issues with which this study is concerned - for example in the rise of the ICU. The consideration of both the working class and the petty bourgeoisie has therefore been essentially focussed on the urban working class and the urban petty bourgeoisie. The study is generally organised chronologically, with each chapter dealing with a defined period, but a certain amount of chronological overlapping has been unavoidable. The period covered is from the formation to the dissolution of the CP, 1921-1950. It has been necessary to go back, at least to 1915, and forward, at least to 1952, to consider the meanings of each of those developments and the broad sweep of class relations within the context of which they occur. The chapters dealing with developments before the formation and

after the dissolution of the CP do not address the same range of issues as the main body of the text. The investigation of the pre-1921 period seeks to establish the theoretical legacy which was brought into the newly-formed CP. The investigation of the post-1950 period seeks to illuminate aspects of the relationship between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class which existed before that period.

As mentioned above, I have made extensive use of the work of the CP historians. These are not only invaluable secondary empirical sources which reflect the value of analysis which is derived from participation as well as observation; they also serve as highly informative primary sources, revealing much, in ex post facto analysis, of the perspective through which developments were viewed by Communists active at the time. I have relied especially heavily on Party documents, journals and newspapers. The latter especially are the best possible sources, both for providing information on developments in the class struggle, and showing how the Party in its day to day activities saw and explained those developments. But they are particularly important sources in another sense. This study is especially concerned to understand and investigate the policies of the CP at the point at which the Party tried to give those policies a significance outside of its own ranks. Its focus, therefore, is not on internal meetings and decision-making processes, but on the point at which the CP conveyed its policies to the community outside it. It is at that point that CP policies assumed a wider social

significance, and at that point that the Party tried to give its policies a wider social significance. The Party press represents the best and in fact the only consistent chronicle, recorded in the heat of political developments, of what the Party chose to convey of its analysis, programme, policies and ideas to the broader community. Historically in the tradition of Communist Parties, the Party press has been the consistent statement of the collective and official view of the Party. It has been an essential part of the process through which the Party tried to carry its message to the masses. This is so, even in a context of widespread illiteracy. It has still been the Party newspaper which has provided the systematic chronicle of the thinking of the Party, its guide to action for its own members, and a systematic statement of the ideas which those members were required to carry to those amongst whom they worked. In this sense, the action of Party members was itself also informed by the Party press. Given my concern to focus on the point at which the Party tried to give its ideas a broader social significance, extensive use of party newspaper and pamphlets - the consistent official statements of Party policy and what it chose to convey from that policy to the outside world - has been absolutely indispensable. I have also made extensive use of the works of other participants in the events under discussion - through books such as those by Roux, Kadalie⁴⁸, Tabata⁴⁹ and Luthuli; and the range of participants represented in the Karis and Carter collections.⁵⁰ Specific items from the Molema and Xuma collections have also been used. Daily newspapers have been consulted for information concerning some of the events discussed, and several government

commission reports, statistical handbooks and Official Yearbooks have been used.

Earlier in this introduction, there was an attempt to situate developments in the academic study of class relations in South Africa within the broader developments of those relations. No-one is immunised from the pressures created by the developments around them. I believe that this study, with whatever inadequacies, misconceptions and differences of interpretation and approach, is part of a series of studies which reflect the persistent dynamism of developments in South African society. In my own case, I was a student at a white university who believed that I was seeing developments through a radical perspective. Beneath the surface of events, the process leading up to and out of the 1976 Soweto uprising was developing. There was a dynamic movement of struggle which I was unable to see. Developments in the class struggle since then have shown me and others something of that dynamic. They have taught me of the need to respect the men, women and youth of the working class and their allies, who fight the struggle about which I and others write. It is my hope that this study serves to show that respect, and something of that same dynamic, at another point in history.

CHAPTER ONE

1915 - 1921

On August 4, 1914, official German Social Democracy, and with it the International, collapsed miserably. Everything that we had been telling the people for fifty years, everything that we had declared to be our most holy principles and had proclaimed countless times in speeches, pamphlets, newspapers and leaflets - with one stroke all that was shown to be empty talk. The party of the international proletarian class struggle has suddenly become, as if through an evil spell, a national liberal party; our strong organisations, of which we were so proud, have turned out to be completely powerless, and we have gone from being the respected and feared enemy of bourgeois society to being the weak-minded and justifiably despised tools of our own mortal enemy, the imperialist bourgeoisie. More or less the same steep decline of socialism has taken place in other countries. The proud old call, 'Workers of the world, unite!' has been changed on the battlefields to the command, 'Workers of the world, cut your throats!'

"Never in the history of the world has a political party gone bankrupt so wretchedly, never has a more noble ideal been so disgracefully betrayed and humiliated!"

- Rosa Luxemburg.¹

The war fever, whipped up by national ruling classes inside Europe, took with it many of the Socialist and Labour parties. Socialist conviction, analysis, and programme of yesterday were replaced by chauvinist fervour, as much of the leadership of the sections of the Second International allied themselves and their organisations with "their own" ruling class. Class struggle was to be "deferred", in favour of the "national interest". Leaders of the parties of the Second International, and the unions associated with them, became major recruiting agents to ensure a

steady supply of working class recruits, and under-managers, in order to ensure that production was maintained for the war effort.

The South African Labour Party (LP) first took an anti-war position.² On 2 August 1914, the Administrative Council of the Party issued a call to workers everywhere to organise against the war.³ On 4 August 1914, Britain entered the war, and jingoist militarism in support of the "mother country" spread amongst a section of the leadership and ranks of the LP. Despite the official Party policy, *The Worker*, the official Party newspaper, repeatedly advocated a pro-war policy.⁴ Some Party branches expressed opposition to the anti-war position;⁵ Party leaders joined the campaign in South West Africa (SWA);⁶ Party MPs (with the single exception of Madeley, who shifted position soon after) voted support for the war effort.⁷ With the majority of the Party leadership committed to supporting the war, the policy of the Administrative Council was increasingly being undermined.

The anti-war opposition responded to this situation inside the Party by organising an internal opposition - the War on War League, and producing a journal, the *War on War Gazette*.⁸ The objectives of the opposition were to maintain Party unity, while struggling to win the Party back to its "'native principles' of international socialism and anti-militarism".⁹ How essential to the Party these had been, the political pressure of the developing war very quickly demonstrated. At the January 1915 Party conference, a majority of delegates appeared to be in

support of the League.¹⁰ The League leadership, trying to avoid a split in the Party, put forward a compromise resolution which was passed unanimously. It was left to each individual, exercising "freedom of conscience", to decide whether to support or oppose the war.¹¹

The efforts of the opposition and its compromise were to prove futile, either in maintaining unity, or in promoting a consistent and active commitment to socialist principles inside the LP. In June 1915, Creswell, the Party leader, returned from the campaign in SWA to spearhead a drive in favour of a pro-war policy.¹² A special conference was called in Johannesburg, and on 22 August 1915 a pro-war resolution was overwhelmingly carried.¹³ The War on War League responded by forming itself into the The International League of the SALP, publishing a weekly journal - *The International*.¹⁴ The *International* of 24 September 1915 reports the decision by the League to withdraw from the LP:

"At the meeting held the previous week it had been decided to submit the question of withdrawing from the South African Labour Party to a plebiscite of the members. There was a full poll of members during the week. The plebiscite resulted in an overwhelming majority in favour of severing all connections with the SALP...."

On 22 September 1915, the International Socialist League (ISL) was established.

The formation of the ISL rested, then, on an apparently clear-cut

issue of political principle - the attitude of socialists to the war. The split from the LP represented a conviction that, on this issue, opposing views were irreconcilable. Behind the unanimous support for the anti-war stand inside the ISL were, however, a series of different political positions. The **War on War Gazette** had stated that the League's constitution involved a single principle. Its members "pledge[d] to oppose this or any other war at all times and at all costs".¹⁵ A whole variety of different political positions were consistent with that approach, and people joining the League did not necessarily have a common political programme, strategy or political analysis.

The ISL, at its formation, was a politically undeveloped group, based on a commitment to an ill-defined "socialism" and "internationalism"; its members had practical experience of political work only in one section of the working class - the upper layers of the white labour aristocracy. They shared a common tradition of exclusive concentration on the white workers, and amongst them was held a range of patronising and racist attitudes towards blacks - features of a "white labour tradition" which had completely dominated the LP. The ISL may have appeared to have been formed on the basis of clearly-defined political principle, but underlying the appearance was a set of ill-defined, ambivalent, and sometimes contradictory political positions. The very fact that the people involved believed that they were operating together on the common foundation of political principle meant that they were ill-prepared to recognise and attempt to deal with the underlying political

differences. It was on this inherently unstable foundation that the ISL set out to examine its political environment, and develop an understanding of its political tasks.

The ISL members had before them the clear example of the political bankruptcy of the LP. In the course of its history, the League developed a deeper understanding of different aspects of the politics from which it was seeking to break. There was an ongoing attempt to develop away from traditional LP policies. Given, however, the traditions from which the members of the ISL came, and the unstable political foundation on which the organisation rested, a reaction against what seemed wrong with the LP was not in itself enough to lead to a comprehensive break with the politics of the white labour tradition, and to a clearly defined alternative. It was only when a small group of individuals within the ISL attempted, in practice, to give meaningful effect to some of the policies which were emerging in contradistinction to the LP, that decisive political developments started taking place within the ISL.¹⁶

In 1915, however, when the organisation first began the attempt to develop its policies, it was ill-equipped, theoretically and in terms of political experience, to respond to the situation around it from a perspective other than that of the white labour tradition. As the organisation slowly began to develop an alternative perspective, the differences within it, and the inherently unstable foundation on which it rested were to come to

the fore. The ISL was faced, immediately, with the contradiction between the socialist internationalism which it professed, and the white labour tradition from which it emerged. If white workers were to be expected to oppose the war on the grounds of class solidarity with workers in other countries, should they not be expected to extend that solidarity to the oppressed black workers of South Africa? The development of ISL policy on this issue - which it described as "the great and fascinating problem of the native"¹⁷ - was to reflect a growing recognition of the contradiction between an aspect of the tradition from which it emerged and the principle of internationalism which it espoused.

The International of 1 October 1915 expresses a clear attempt to break away from the politics of the LP and extend the principles of internationalism into the specifics of the SA class struggle: "An internationalism which does not concede the fullest rights which the native working class is capable of claiming will be a sham. One of our justifications for our withdrawal from the Labour Party is that it gives us untrammelled freedom to deal, regardless of political fortunes, with the great and fascinating problem of the native. If the League deals resolutely in consonance with Socialist principles with the native question, it will succeed in shaking South African capitalism to its foundations. Then, and not till then, shall we be able to talk about the South African proletariat in our international relations. Not till we free the native can we hope to free the white."

This statement expresses the desire of the League to move beyond the fetters of the LP policy towards black workers. At the same time it expresses, as does all League propaganda at the time, primary concern with the white worker. The "political fortune" to which the article refers has to do with the LP concern not to raise the question of black workers, in order not to alienate the whites. The League was to be resolute in rejecting policies designed for electoral advantage. Nonetheless, it appears to be outside the considerations of the writer that the goals of the League might include the building of a political base amongst what it comes to recognise as the majority of the working class - the black workers. In the same edition of the International, the implicit assumptions of the white labour tradition are made clear in the claim that "the conference, which it is hoped to call in a few months here should be representative of the whole of South Africa".¹⁸ Given the League's resources, membership and location, "the whole of South Africa" can only mean broadly representative of the organisations of the white worker throughout South Africa.

The way in which the ISL initially approached the "native question" served to compound two facets of its initial starting point: firstly, a basis of individual morality from which to approach issues of class struggle; and, secondly, the closely connected absence of a developed materialist theoretical framework within which to locate that morality, and from which to approach those questions of class struggle.

The first systematic ISL policy on the "native question" reflected an abstracted idealism on the basis of which expressions of proletarian internationalism and a commitment to working class solidarity could be coupled with a de facto segregationist position. At its first conference, early in 1916, the League, having encouraged "the organisation of workers on industrial or class lines, irrespective of race, colour and creed"¹⁹ adopted the following in its main resolution on the native question:

"This League affirms that the emancipation of the working class requires the abolition of all forms of native indenture, compound and passport systems, and the lifting of the native wage worker to the political and industrial status of the white...." The following amendment was added, and accepted:

"....meanwhile endeavouring to prevent the increase of the native wage workers, and to assist the existing native wage workers to free themselves from the wage system".²⁰

At its first conference we see the totally different, and in fact contradictory, politics of at least two different tendencies in the League being blended together into an abstract, idealist whole.

The belief in segregation was to survive after the organisation had effectively, although not formally, rejected the notion of de-proletarianisation. Thus there is reference to "the ethnological tendency ... which makes for the natural social apartness of white and black"²¹ And in an International editorial, the League puts forward a view on how best to maintain

segregation:

"One would imagine that Industrial Unionism proposed the introduction of Brahminical marriage rites by the way the Segregationist continually harps on the mixed marriage question; as to the evils of this, both whites and natives largely agree. The way to healthy social segregation is through Industrial co-operation."²²

On this basis, proletarian internationalism could be understood as an expression of paternalist duty. It could, in other words, be absorbed by some of the members of the ISL in such a way as to leave substantially unchallenged a view of the "civilising" mission of the whites; of blacks as more or less helpless victims; of white workers (the most skilled, the best organised) as automatically having the primary role in building socialism. All of these were tenets which, while containing an abstract commitment to the freedom of blacks, could also involve a commitment to segregation and be contained within the framework of the white labour tradition.

Despite these positions, a commitment to proletarian internationalism, however ill-defined and loosely understood, had led the ISL to express a formal commitment to inter-racial working class solidarity; and a tendency within the organisation was consistently seeking to break from the crude racism of the LP. Immediately after its formation, the League was objectively faced with the problem of how to reconcile its newly-expressed

commitment to inter-racial class solidarity with elections based on a racially exclusive franchise. The evidence suggests that the League did not see the need for such a reconciliation. The majority of its members came from a tradition in which election campaigns were entirely opportunist, based on a conception of how best to win votes. For those members, entering an election campaign in order to put forward political principles - even if they were unpopular - represented in itself a major political break from the LP. In the process of this step, other political issues, posed by the racially constituted framework of the "democratic process", remained submerged, and were not considered. The League entered the Transvaal provincial and municipal elections in October 1915 and October 1916²³ on a platform dominated by the anti-war position, under the slogans: "NO CONSCRIPTION" and "AWAY WITH THE CAPITALIST WAR AND CAPITALIST ROBBERY"²⁴. The position of the League, and the way in which it approached the elections, thus represented a major political development from the political method of the LP. It also meant that the first major political work of the League provided immediate practical support for the persistence of a primary concern with white workers.

The practical realities of trade unionism at the time operated in a similar way to concentrate the attention of the League on the white worker. Almost all union members were white, their leaders were white, and many of them were craft organisations in industries where access to skills was racially exclusive. For the ISL, steeped in the white labour tradition, lacking a

materialist conception of the development of capitalism, the tendency to automatically concentrate upon the white workers, and assume their vanguard role in an empiricist way, was deep-rooted.²⁵ Consequently, the earliest propaganda efforts of the League in relation to "the organisation of all workers irrespective of race, colour and creed", were directed at convincing white workers that the organisation of black workers would be in their (the white workers') interests.²⁶

The earliest political experience of the League, then, did not challenge the particular remnants of the white labour tradition which persisted in it; nor did it challenge the idealist approach to the political situation. These challenges were to come, over time. Meanwhile, the refusal to go along with jingoist militarism, and the overt rejection of the crude racism of the LP represented a clear break from the politics of the LP - even if "internationalism" was understood in a way which did not substantively challenge some of the aspects of the white labour tradition.

The attempt by the League to move away from the politics of the LP was strengthened by two major conclusions, deriving from the practical experience of the majority of members, before the split from the LP. Craft unionism had come to be seen as a divisive and corrupting form of labour organisation; and a political method which was based on a simple opportunist appeal for voters' prejudice was seen as an unacceptable and ineffective means of striving for socialism. In an editorial in the *International*, less than two months after the formation of the League, the opposition to craft divisions is made clear:

"The new movement will break the bounds of craft and race and sex. It will be founded on the rock of the meanest proletarian who toils for a master. It will be as wide as humanity. It will recognise no bounds of craft, no exclusion of colour."²⁷

Given the pre-existing racial exclusivity of the craft unions, and the racially-determined access to skills and training, the principle of racially integrated organisation clearly implied a form of organisation that did not follow craft lines. The opposition to the racial divisions in the labour movement and the opposition to craft unionism complemented each other. The League also attributed divisions amongst white workers to craft unionism: "The purely craft nature of the unions has also come out in their complete oblivion to the sufferage of the lower-paid and unemployed white workers, mainly women."²⁸ Examining the lack of a united organisation of mineworkers, the *International* writes:

"What is the greatest hindrance to the organisation of the miners

here? One is the temporary sojourn of the men in the industry owing to its vigour, aggravated by the fact that timber men, fitters, carpenters, and engine drivers in the mines are organised solely in their crafts, far away from the issues of industry which so vitally affect them."²⁹

In the comments on the organisation of mineworkers, the writer clearly has in mind only white workers; a commitment to non-racialism in principle and an opposition to craft unionism may have promoted and complemented each other - but they did not mean that the white labour tradition was therefore destroyed.

Craft unionism thus came to be rejected, as both the cause and the expression of the failure of the organised, skilled, white worker to develop any genuine solidarity with the rest of the working class - working class women, unskilled, unemployed whites as well as blacks - when the attention of the League was directed to the issue. The ISL began to adopt a clearer and clearer commitment to industrial unionism. And it identified, as its most immediate task, the need to develop propaganda aimed at convincing the organised white worker of the ISL's conclusions.

This development of a commitment to industrial unionism coincided with the ISL's conclusions concerning the experience of what it saw as "opportunistic electioneering" inside the LP.³⁰ The question facing the ISL shifts from how to win votes to whether to participate in elections. The question is not taken up because the mass of the working class are excluded from elections, but

because of the rejection of "opportunism", and doubts about the real power of Parliament and other elected bodies. In an editorial headed "Ethics of Elections", the International writes: "The revolutionary character of a party does not consist in abstaining from fighting in elections. It consists in fighting them on a revolutionary issue. True the Provincial Council offers no remedy, no solution. We are even getting convinced that Parliament does not either. But the elections to these bodies constitute the only bodies yet known to the people. The question for us is - shall the people be left to the false issues raised by the non-socialist parties?"³¹

The doubts about Parliament are resolved less than two months later:

"Parliament is after all only a house. Its function is to regulate and adjust the capitalist system and to legislate the necessary violence for its preservation. But whichever power controls industry can dispense with Parliament and remain unscathed.... A socialist majority without adequate industrial organisation behind it would not mean the resolution of class conflict. The day of such a socialist majority would ... be the day of its defeat. An attempt on its part to establish socialism would result only in bloody anarchy."³²

The critical attitude of the ISL to parliamentary activity was not initially based on simple a-politicism.³³ It arose as a specific response to the practical experience of vote-mongering within the LP, and reflected the general belief that political

issues could be addressed and resolved through industrial organisation:

"In all countries the problems of Labour vary enormously. The first necessity of the industrially organised working class will be to sweep away the chief barriers to efficient working class solidarity. The pensions bogey which prevents the Railwaymen coming together, the denial of equal civil liberty to the native wage worker, the compound and indenture system which make him cheaper and more exploitable - these great barriers unparalleled in any other labour movement, against the marshalling of the proletariat side by side can only be removed by political action.... The extent to which labour can get its political demands acceded to will not depend primarily on whether it gets 20 or 40 representatives to carry out its mandate, but on the strength of the industrial organisation which will back those mandates."³⁴

For the ISL, then, industrial unionism was not a substitute, but the necessary basis for "political action" - although, consistently with the politics of the League generally, what "political action" meant was left vague and undefined. Industrial unionism was adopted as a particular organisational form, necessary to developing economic and political struggle. This position was at first consolidated, and then extended, by the influence which syndicalism came to have inside the ISL.

Syndicalists had been active in the SA labour movement before the

beginning of the 20th Century, and syndicalism was the guiding doctrine of a number of small socialist organisations.³⁵ These included the Social Democratic Federation which was to participate, in 1921, in the formation of the CPSA. Syndicalists were attracted to the anti-war opposition in the LP, and then to the ISL. Equally appealing was the strong criticism which the ISL made of the dominant leadership of the official labour movement. The ex-LP members of the ISL were in turn particularly receptive to the syndicalist commitment to industrial unionism and the suspicion of elections.³⁶ This receptivity was compounded by the theoretical weakness within the League - the absence of a developed analytical method and political theory. For the ISL, seeking to break away from the obvious class collaboration of the LP, syndicalism presented the only developed attempt to apply at least aspects of Marxist theory to the South African situation. The availability of the developed theoretical framework of syndicalism coincided with the growing commitment to industrial unionism within the ISL. The commitment to a form of organisation - arising out of the practical experience of the attempt to pursue general socialist principles - began to be theorised in terms of the overall strategy of syndicalism.³⁷ The political lesson, derived from political experience, came to be "explained" by a general theory which seemed to fit the experience. Its lack of a theoretically developed and concrete materialist understanding of the class struggle around it laid the basis for the politics of the League to become a series of responses to immediate appearances - coupled with an idealist commitment to a set of principles. The missing link between general principles

and immediate political programme was a theoretical method which could, on the basis of a concrete political analysis, show the way to translate the general principles into the immediate programme. Syndicalism was the abstract theory - a codification in terms of which the actual politics of the organisation, the differences, the idealism and the empiricism, came to be "theorised." Given the separation between abstracted principles and immediate political responses, and recognising the differences within the League from its inception, it was to be expected that for different members the same principles and the same political situation would give rise to different - and even contradictory - political responses.

The syndicalists brought to the ISL a tradition which rested on calls for the broadest possible organisation of the working class, and rejected parliamentary politics. Syndicalism thus promoted a generalised concern with the working class - rather than with the working class electorate, or the already organised workers. That tradition complemented corresponding sentiments amongst ex-LP members. But, given the idealised and abstract meaning of syndicalism for the League, that generalised concern did not, in itself, create a substantive challenge to the white labour tradition of the League.³⁸ It could co-exist, at the level of a general ideal, with a variety of immediate political attitudes and actions. Even as a tendency developed with the beginnings of an orientation to the black worker,³⁹ the broader limitations of the white labour tradition continued. In

particular, there continued the belief in the primary role of the white worker in the struggle for socialism, forms of paternalism,⁴⁰ and the approach to issues of the class struggle from the point of view of the white worker. And many of members of the ISL, the white worker almost invariably meant the organised, skilled or semi-skilled, male white worker.

Against this background, the developing concern with the black worker was to be expressed in three inter-related ways: an attempt to combat racism amongst League members and to convince them of the need to "educate and organise" the black; efforts to move away from any accommodation to the racial prejudices of the white worker; and propaganda attempts to convince the white worker of the need for solidarity from and with the black. It was only in the second period of the League's development (mid-1917 to 1921) that this increasing concern is actually carried over into practical attempts to carry out out the professed task of educating and organising the black worker.

As we have seen, the first newspaper of the newly formed League informed its readers that "an internationalism which does not concede the fullest rights which the native working class is capable of claiming will be a sham".⁴¹ By 1917, the increasing importance which the League attaches to the "native question" has become clear. Turning to an examination of its role in building that "internationalism", the International writes:

"[T]he salient point in theory and practice which socialists have to fight out in South Africa is their attitude towards the native

wage labourers. This question goes to the root of socialist theory ... it is the burning question of the time for us."⁴²

During the intervening period, the initial largely moral orientation to the issue of black workers had come to be reinforced by a more concrete analysis.

The initial policy of the League (first conference, January 1916) had involved a commitment to the de-proletarianisation of the black worker. Shortly after, this policy is implicitly overturned. Dealing with the question of unemployment pay for whites, the International writes:

"All agree for various reasons in deprecating charity. Nevertheless for the hundreds of poor folk who now have to accept the degrading dole at Pretoria, Socialism is emphatically not the remedy. Capitalism is the remedy, and Socialism is the remedy for the remedy.

"Socialism is come to destroy not industry, but Capitalism. As the only present condition for the development of industry is that it shall be capitalist industry every extension of capitalist industry should, all other things being equal, be encouraged as the only remedy for agrarian unemployment."⁴³

Within an idealist, rigidly segregationist framework, it was possible to envisage an expanding industrial white South Africa, and an agrarian black South Africa where, presumably, the problem of agrarian unemployment would be resolved by other means. But the League's belief that industrial expansion is to be welcomed

comes to challenge its policy of de-proletarianisation of the black. At the same time, the persistence of segregationist beliefs inside the League created a pressure on those who supported an orientation to black workers not to rely simply on moral arguments, but to develop more solid theoretical positions in support of that orientation. As the concern with black workers develops, so too does the recognition that they constitute a majority, and, in an economy in which industry and capitalist agriculture are expanding, an increasing majority of the working class.⁴⁴ The importance of black workers starts being seen, not simply in moral terms, but increasingly in terms of the strategic location of black workers within the production process.

In February 1916, the International refers to "black workers ... who form the bulk of the South African proletariat".⁴⁵ An editorial in the following edition of the paper states: "We see the kaffir get more and more control of the drills in the mine. Very soon he will exercise the economic power that goes with it."⁴⁶ In March 1916, the de-proletarianisation position is explicitly overthrown. "We are ... compelled to deal with the native question not by removing it, but by recognising the native as perforce a permanent fellow worker."⁴⁷ Having recognised the permanence, and pointed to at least part of the potential power, of black workers, the ISL supports the comments of labour leader George Mason:

"You can never stop industry in this country without organising

the native.... In the July strike they had discovered that the interests of the white workers were bound up with those of the native. They found that they could not stop Kleinfontein mine without native co-operation. He therefore appealed to them and they responded almost to a man and the mine was stopped."⁴⁸

SG Rich underlines the developing recognition of the need to organise black workers when he writes in the International:

"Let us face the facts. The bulk of unskilled labour in South Africa is done by natives - 'kaffirs', 'niggers'. A Labour Movement which does not make it a policy to organise and educate the unskilled, is, by that fact, a movement of only part of labour, and is sure to sacrifice the rest. Furthermore, without the unskilled, whose life by that fact is the most thoroughly proletarian of any, the labour movement can not be revolutionary. It has foregone the motive power of revolution."⁴⁹

The cumulative effect of different factors -the support for industrial unionism, the rejection of parliamentarism, the growing recognition of the permanence of black workers, moral principles, and the experience of struggle - all combine to promote a growing commitment to the education and organisation of the black worker. As the International puts it:

"The duty of a revolutionary political party today is to create the class conscious, industrial solidarity, without fear or favour to white skin or black, of an undivided working class."⁵⁰

Assessing its role in the conditions which might be generated by the war, the International writes:

"Indications [are] there will be a huge barricading mob perhaps, but it will be our ruin if we are content to ride on it instead of organising and educating it on unflinching, uncompromising Socialist lines, teeth clenched - and - irrespective of race, creed or colour."⁵¹

The tendency which identified the task of organising and educating the black workers because they were a permanent part of the working class faced two clear problems in taking up that task: firstly, the lack of willingness amongst some of the members of the ISL to agree with its developing theoretical understanding of the place of black workers in the process of production; secondly, the lack of response from white workers to the initial propaganda calls for class solidarity across racial lines. That this tendency was itself operating within the broader limitations of the white labour tradition is revealed in the fact that, during the first period of its development, it took no direct steps aimed at organising and educating black workers. Instead, it was almost exclusively absorbed in propaganda efforts aimed at convincing not merely white workers generally, but also its own members, of the desirability of such organisation and education.

In the edition of 1 October 1915 (10 days after the formation of the League) *International* carries a report of the latest in a series of Sunday open-air meetings which the War on War tendency in the LP had begun. The article points out:

"A feature of these meetings is the little knot of interested native and coloured men always there. Some bought the International. Let who will sneer, nothing convinces us of the universality of our appeal so much as this. We shall never be on bedrock until we can command the attention of the dark skinned proletariat of South Africa".

On 2 June 1916, the International advertises a meeting to be held by the ISL:

"Next Thursday ... Mr Robert Grendon, the accomplished editor of the Johannesburg native newspaper Abantu Bathu will be the lecturer, his subject being 'Links between black and white'. So far as is known, this is the first occasion in the Transvaal on which a native has addressed a white audience on a subject of this kind."

In the International there is gradually introduced news of black workers,⁵² and reports of speeches by black leaders. ISL meetings are advertised as being open to blacks, and later there are invitations to black leaders to address white socialists. There is a consistent series of pleas,⁵³ usually by Bunting, calling on white workers and socialists to take seriously the task of organising and educating black workers.⁵⁴ Through the International, leaflets, election propaganda and speeches by its members, the ISL tried to carry the idea of working class solidarity to white workers. The manifesto for the Johannesburg municipal elections, issued on 6 October 1916, distributed in the white working class areas in which the League was standing,

argues:

"It is for the white workers to stretch out the hand of industrial unity to the native workers and enlist the enormous economic power they can wield from the side of the capitalists to the side of the working class and true civilisation."⁵⁵

In May 1917, the International argues:

"We can engineer other campaigns, put up big lists of Labour candidates and get Labour Parties artificially organised by the capitalist press, but to ignore the native worker, and confine our hopes of the working class movement to the top layers of the white artisans is to reduce it into a nationalist skirmish for prior places at the capitalist table, with Wallers at the head, dishing out the sops.

"The most accute form the class war can take in South Africa today is the preparing the minds of the people to the inevitable coming of the power of the native proletariat, and making its coming beneficent to all. And 'the people' includes the native worker."⁵⁶

The International of 16 March 1917 reveals two milestones - the first article in the paper by a black, and an "historic occasion as Socialists demonstrated for the first time on the Rand against racial legislation which did not directly affect whites".⁵⁷ The article was written by Horatio Bud-Mbelle⁵⁸ who had been on the platform at the protest meeting.⁵⁹ It lauded the stand of the ISL against the Native Affairs Administration Bill, and against

racism generally. A report of the meeting in the International comments:

"Last Sunday's protest meeting of whites and natives in the Trades Hall was declared one of the best and most enthusiastic League meetings yet held.... [A] large sprinkling of natives turned up in response to the press advert inviting all 'irrespective of race, colour or creed', with a solid block of whites in full sympathy with the objects of the meeting, namely to protest against the Native Affairs Administration Bill. It was gratifying to see how easily the whole audience caught up the spirit of forgetting for the time being that there was such a thing as colour."⁶⁰

As the League moved towards its third year, such advances remained limited exceptions. And as far as its major work was concerned - solidarity appeals and propaganda directed at white workers, it was still having little impact. The first testing ground of the League was elections, and the highest vote it ever achieved was little over 300.⁶¹ Initially, syndicalists had seized upon the lack of electoral success in order to fuel their argument in favour of syndicalist electoral abstention. The League decided not to stand in the 1917 municipal elections.⁶² But it was difficult for the League to escape the conclusion that if white workers did not vote for its message of industrial solidarity, there were still substantial obstacles to be overcome before they could be expected to act upon it. The actual experience of the League, in attempting to take its message to

white workers, was that its appeals alone were not enough. Parliamentarism had been rejected, craft unionism had been denounced and its divisive nature explained, but the white workers still did not listen. This opened up questions which, if taken up, challenged the general theoretical and practical political method of the League.

The consequences of this for the League were potentially extremely significant. That tension, ill-perceived and inadequately understood as it may have been, operated in the area of the primary work of the League. There was a pressure for the League to explain more - and to develop the theoretical method which would help it to do so. That pressure was complemented by the attempts to theoretically understand, rather than simply moralise about, the position of the black worker within the process of production. The most immediate result was to strengthen the argument of those in the League who supported an orientation to black workers, both because they were a permanent part of the working class, and because the self-interest of white workers demanded their support:

"There is no way of suppressing coloured or native workers or preventing them from working.... Organisation by white workers to refuse to work where coloured men are employed at a cheaper rate only leads in the long run to the dismissal of the white workers in favour of the coloured, and statistics show that this is going on. The only alternative, dictated both by the self-interest of the whites and by the fundamental principles of the working class movement, is to ignore colour or race distinctions and rope all

the coloured workers into the movement and its organisations; further to abandon the divisions of industrial organisation according to pay, and recognise that the movement can not wait to be all embracing (as it must be to win) until everyone gets standard pay, but on the contrary everyone will never get standard pay until the movement embraces all grades...."⁶³

The League found itself under the growing pressure which its policies and theoretical approach had promoted. If white workers could not respond to the call to solidarity because of craft unionism, and the lack of organisation amongst black workers was itself an obstacle to freeing the whites of their prejudice, then a political method of appeals to whites could never, by itself, succeed. But the only possible conclusion - that the League should turn to the task of actually building the organisation of black workers - hit directly against the white labour tradition from which the organisation had not completely broken. Behind the differences in the organisation, two clear emergent tendencies can be identified - although in the real situation, they were not clearly and precisely articulated as different tendencies, and there were overlaps between them.

The first, on the basis of actual political experience, was being forced towards attempts to develop a more concrete theoretical analysis and establish a more consistent and theorised orientation to black workers. The second remained firmly within the white labour tradition, with entrenched prejudices largely unchallenged. General socialist principles were invoked in an abstract way, being used to justify and explain that situation. Through the whole history of the ISL, the development of the first tendency - the "progressive tendency" - was tentative. The individuals - in the leadership of the organisation - who were making the developments which it reflected were themselves caught up within the broader limitations of the white labour tradition. And, as events were to show, despite the development of a more

concrete analysis, they were liable to view developments in the class struggle through a rarefied and abstracted perspective.

Such theoretical insights as were developed from the attempts to explain the political situation were partial, ill-defined, and unsophisticated. Their significance lies, not primarily in their content, but in the type of theory and the theoretical method which they represent - a more concrete theory arising from a developing political practice. The development of such a theoretical method, in the first phases of the existence of the ISL, did not occur as a smooth process. It was being born within a framework which incorporated the broader limitations of the white labour tradition. The starting point is always the white - worker or socialist - and what to explain to him or her. There are remnants of the approach which raises the issue of black workers exclusively in terms of the self-interest of the white. There is an almost complete isolation from what is actually happening amongst black workers.⁶⁴ The labour movement is understood to be the organised workers - the white workers. But the theoretical method which identified the black as a permanent majority of the working class created tensions with these aspects of the white labour tradition, as well as with the cruder racism of some of the other members of the League. The progressive tendency was most obvious in its attempts to develop an orientation to the black worker. But the theoretical method which it was developing laid the basis for a more developed political strategy embracing the white worker as well.

Carried to its logical conclusion, the division within the ISL would inevitably lead to different programmatic demands, different tactical and strategic conclusions. The beginnings of that set of difference were created when one part of the League actually began to turn to the organisation and education of black workers - not simply because the interests of the white workers demanded it, or simply because it was morally correct - but because these workers were a permanent, majority part of the working class, and the actual struggle for socialism demanded that they be organised. The development of this latter understanding inevitably widened political differences which had been masked within the League at its foundation. Amongst people who had propounded segregationism, de-proletarianisation, and invoked the "ethnological factors" making for the "natural separation of black and white", there could obviously not be unanimous approval for any active policy of non-racial organisation of the working class.⁶⁵ The furthest that those with such positions could be drawn was to a recognition of the need to organise blacks because, before they returned to the rural areas, they were important to the struggles of the "real" working class - the white workers. There can be no doubt that there was a struggle going on inside the ISL even if, given the theoretical limitations and the lack of consistent and clearly defined positions on which the organisation was founded, that struggle was not fought out through clear argument between different positions. By mid-1917, however, that underlying conflict had not come fully to the fore; the two tendencies and lines of

theoretical development within the League had not been sufficiently clearly defined or articulated; the essentially unstable foundation of the organisation remained basically unchanged. But the challenge to this situation was there - and growing.

Roux, discussing the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution, argues: "Native affairs began to play a smaller part in the activities of the ISL as well as in the pages of its newspaper. Who could be bothered with politically backward and largely unorganised Africans when such resounding events were happening overseas? Work among Africans, never very popular with the rank and file in the League, was crowded out or left to a few 'cranks' of whom Bunting and Jones were the most outstanding and persistent."⁶⁶

The reality was more complex than the picture he presents. The Bolshevik Revolution gave an enormous boost to the progressive tendency and its argument that there should be an orientation to the mass of the working class. It was, however, understood and used in an abstract way, coming to serve as a "confirmation" of the validity of industrial unionism. And, in the common enthusiasm which it created amongst the members of the League, the underlying differences and lack of clarity within the organisation were submerged. It was, in other words, not the fact that League members focussed on this international development, but that they viewed it through an abstract theoretical perspective, in a way which left unresolved differences persisting beneath the surface, which meant that the Bolshevik

Revolution did not serve merely to promote the progressive tendency developing within the League. But it is equally true that the unfolding revolution was used as a spur to organisation amongst black workers:

"The Russian revolution in South Africa means the welcome hand to the native workingman into the fullest social and economic equality he is capable of attaining with the white man. This is the bedrock on which we split in South Africa."⁶⁷

"Instead of waiting on Russia, any apparent slackening overseas must spur us on to redoubled propaganda, redoubled organisation by way of compensation here, and in particular, to much more than redoubled educative effort among our disinherited native toilers, the real working class, broadly speaking, of South Africa."⁶⁸

The League turns to the issue of education in a much more critical way. Referring to the Sunday meetings, the International writes:

"But let us be frank about these meetings. The audience they attract will certainly have to support the proletarian revolution, but it can not be said as yet to be even a white working class audience, while as for native workers, notwithstanding repeated advertisements welcoming 'all irrespective of colour' they are still too shy and suspicious of the white to attend, except on rare and special occasions."⁶⁹

In a report of the 4th July Independence Day meeting, International writes:

"It was most gratifying to see a number of natives, men and women, in the hall; a feature which, when it develops, will inevitably widen our speakers' outlook and make real our professed repudiation of race or colour distinctions. Let each of our speakers ask himself: 'Did my address interest, or appeal to those natives in the audience? If not is it their fault, or is it my fault for dealing only with purely white mans' affairs, pitching my key to an audience of shop-keepers instead of proletarians?' For every reason we hope to see more and more native wage-earners at these meetings each Sunday."⁷⁰

This is the first clear sign of an awareness within the League that it is the responsibility of the socialist to convey a message in a way which connects with the experience of the worker. A development of the same understanding would have removed the presumption that all black workers could read, or understand English. It was taken further, to a clear declaration of something which had not always been obvious in the League - an understanding that black workers were not a passive mass, capable of action only when they were educated by socialists. The same lesson was to be repeated to the League when black workers went on strike (without having been "educated and organised"), and it was this action of black workers which drew the politics of the League onto a new level.

A part of this development was reflected in July 1917, in the **International**. Referring to black workers, the article argues:

"The people under discussion are not to be considered passive creatures waiting for their white brothers to emancipate them. They will have to be very fully consulted in all matters of interest to them. When using the term working class, proletariat etc, if we would be sincere, we must without reservation include this section of the people. To do otherwise cuts away the foundation on which we must seek to build the abolition of all class privileges. It follows then that being workers, they must fight for the full reward of their labour, and must organise for that purpose industrially. Whether in the white unions in the initial stages, or in parallel organisations is a matter of tactics which native and white workers must mutually agree upon."⁷¹

Such a view represents a clear development from earlier positions in the *International*, where the passivity, inactivity and lack of organisation by black workers are put forward as reasons for the racism of white workers.⁷² The nature of the comments, however, reflects the persistence of the presumptions of the position from which the writer (Andrews) views the world. Socialists are white and educated; the audience they speak to is white; socialists and workers are almost always presumed to be male; the question of black workers is approached via the position of the white worker, and the solution still requires the agreement of the whites. In that sense, the organisation of black workers is still seen as conditional upon the attitude of whites.

Nonetheless, the progressive tendency within the organisation, prompted by the unfolding example of the Bolshevik Revolution,

came to the point of resolving the ambivalence which had stood as an obstacle to any real involvement amongst black workers:- on the one hand, the condition for the crushing of the racism of white workers was seen as the organisation of blacks; on the other, the way in which the issue was pursued was through propaganda, aimed at convincing the white worker of the need for the black to organise. Finally, in July 1917, the first real step towards "educating" the black worker was taken. The ISL began a series of classes on the labour movement for blacks.⁷³ The base provided by these classes became an important part of the foundation of the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA). The International begins to announce triumphantly that black workers are responding to the message of industrial unionism.⁷⁴ And a series of major struggles by black workers in the ensuing period served to strengthen the orientation to those workers by some within the ISL.

The IWA, initially called "The Society of the Industrial Workers of the World", was formed at a supposedly secret meeting on 27 September 1917.⁷⁵ The first public evidence of the existence of the organisation was at a meeting, under the joint auspices of the IWA, Transvaal Native Congress (TNC), and African Peoples' Organisation (APO) on 21 December 1917.⁷⁶ Shortly after its formation, the IWA produced a leaflet in Sotho and Zulu - a general call for black workers to unite and "awake":

"There is only one way of deliverance for you, Bantu workers. Unite as workers, unite! Forget the things that divide you. Let there be no talk of Basuto, Zulu, or Shangaan. You are all labourers. Let Labour be your common bond.

"Wake up! And open your ears. The sun has arisen, the day is breaking. For a long time you were asleep when the great mill of the rich man was grinding and breaking the sweat from your work for nothing. You are strongly urged to come to meeting of the workers and fight for your rights. Come and listen to the good news and deliver yourself from the chains of the capitalist. Unity is strength"⁷⁷

This pamphlet was distributed at a time when a boycott of mine-stores was being developed on the East Rand.⁷⁸ The leaflet was distributed on at least some mines,⁷⁹ and at the IWA meeting of 15 March 1918, "one member urged the production of more leaflets, claiming that the IWA's leaflet had helped to cause the stores boycott."⁸⁰

In June 1918, black sanitary workers in Johannesburg went on strike - the "bucket-boy strike". The workers demanded between 4d and 6d a day increase, from a minimum salary of 1/8.⁸¹ The strike was broken by the use of black police as scabs, and by the arrest of 152 workers.⁸² Strikers were charged under the Masters and Servants, Riotous Assembly, and Criminal Laws Amendment Acts. Many of the strikers were given a two months sentence; for others, the sentence was suspended.⁸³ As an immediate result of

that strike, three members of the ISL - Bunting, Hanscombe and Tinker - were charged with incitement to violence, with the prosecution arguing that the IWA and the ISL were responsible for the strike.⁸⁴ The case collapsed when the main prosecution witness turned out to be a police informer giving false evidence.⁸⁵

In the aftermath of this strike, the APO, TNC and IWA set up a joint committee, and organised a public protest meeting on 19 June 1918. This meeting launched the demand for 1/- a day for all black workers on the Rand by 1 July, failing which a general strike would be called on that day.⁸⁶ In the days leading up to 1 July, workers were urged not to strike by the Vice President of the Native National Congress (NNC).⁸⁷ On the day, a message from the President of the NNC called on workers not to strike under any circumstances.⁸⁸ Several thousand miners still came out at three Rand mines;⁸⁹ a thousand municipal workers joined the action. At the Ferreira municipal compound, the strikers were attacked by a police charge, and soldiers surrounded the compound.⁹⁰

In this period of a growing movement of opposition, spearheaded by working class action, the NNC launched an anti-pass campaign.⁹¹ This campaign, despite the wishes of its leaders, became caught up in the general situation of growing combativity and organisation.⁹² In January 1919, the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) was formed.⁹³ In February there was a strike for higher wages in Bloemfontein, and "riots" when strikers and supporters were attacked by police.⁹⁴ In March 1919, there was a

series of clashes between anti-pass protestors and police. The campaign resulted in approximately 700 arrests - and the near attack of Bunting, who was defending some of those arrested, by a mob of whites.⁹⁵ In December 1919, the ICU led a dockers' strike in Cape Town.⁹⁶ And in February 1920, the movement was led onto a new level by the development of a massive miners' strike on the Rand.⁹⁷ The strikers made three demands- a wage increase from 2/3 a shift to 10/- per day; improvements in the mine stores; and access to higher paid skilled jobs.⁹⁸ On 20 February, 40,000 miners were reported as being on strike at nine different mines.⁹⁹ By 25 February, the number on strike was 71,000.¹⁰⁰ In a report presented to the Executive of the Third International, Ivon Jones described the 1920 strike as "the most portentous event so far in the awakening of the native workers". He put the number of strikers at 80,000.¹⁰¹ Within a week, the majority of strikers had been forced back to work. The police surrounded different compounds, cutting off groups of workers from each other. Workers were ordered down the mines at gunpoint. At Village Deep, three miners were killed when they resisted police orders. At least eight other workers were killed in the course of the struggle.¹⁰²

Here was clear evidence to support the message which some socialists within the ISL had tried to preach: black workers were not passive, they would also fight for their rights. The actual level of organisation and action by black workers strengthened the arguments of the progressive tendency - and also challenged their own conception that the labour movement consisted of organised whites. The mine-store boycott was regarded as a

"piece of misguided tactics, an attack on the branch rather than the root", but it was lauded as a "fine exhibition of 'scab-proofness'":¹⁰³

"There is a tendency on the part of whites to laugh at the ignorant native kicking at the middle man. It is clear he ought to go for a rise in wages. We can all see that now. He is robbed not as a consumer but at the point of production. This is what the Socialist has been urging on the white worker for many years. Meanwhile, while the boycott is misdirected, the solidarity displayed is the significant thing. It ought to make the white Trade Unionist pause in admiration, and consider their relations towards the mass of unskilled labour which they today spurn as beneath the place of working class solidarity."¹⁰⁴

The 1920 strike brought to the fore the developments inside the organisation. It produced, for the first time, a specific call to white workers to support the actual struggle of blacks:

"Back them up! The Chamber of Mines will be asking you to take up the rifle to dragoon the Native strikers. Don't do it! That would wreck the Labour movement in this country.

"Be on the side of labour, even Native labour, against our common capitalist masters. The Natives have shown that they can stop the mines as well as you can. Get them on your side...."¹⁰⁵

But the enthusiasm and support from the ISL for these developing struggles by black workers was tempered. Together with the

message that black workers were also workers had gone the message that they needed to organise before they could win their rights. The often spontaneous action, never organised in the idealised way which the ISL believed to be necessary, did not neatly fit into that model. The ISL members arrested for incitement in the aftermath of the bucket-strike defended themselves by arguing that they would never call for action while workers were so badly organised. And in March 1918, International warned:

"Take warning. Left to themselves and condemned to secrecy, the native workers who are determined in any case to assert themselves are in danger of attempting to do so by mistaken methods, possibly of violence which, without benefitting them, may cause disaster all round. Their patient instruction in the light of day by white men having knowledge and experience of the cardinal principles of the Labour Movement, will ensure a constitutional progress which, though it will end in the surrender of the capitalist class, will avoid such evils as the white workers justifiably fear."¹⁰⁶

And, even in the enthusiasm for the 1920 strike, when the organisation was being forced to recognise that blacks were already part of the labour movement, the organisation pointed to the "barriers of race, language, and above all, police" which prevented them from "instructing the native labourers on the principles of working class solidarity".¹⁰⁷

Records from police spies give us some idea of how the

syndicalists within the ISL allegedly understood the "constitutional progress", to which the International referred. While such sources of information can not, in any way be relied upon, they do in some cases present a picture of propaganda and argument which is consistent with the features of the idealised and abstract approach of the ISL which has already been noted. Discussing the production and distribution of the IWA leaflet, Dunbar, an ISL member, summed up, saying that the pamphlets "will tell them how to organise and the results of organisation". He emphasised again that 'if all the natives strike and stop work, the Government can not put the whole lot of them in gaol, because they will have no food to feed them. Then they will give them what they demand very soon'"¹⁰⁸

The police spy reported Dunbar's message at another meeting as follows:

"We natives on the Rand don't vote, so we can stop work and strike, demanding what we want, and we will get it in two days, without any trouble. If we can organise all the natives on the mines and one day the whole lot strike and demand what they want, the Government will come in motor cars and give you what you demand, because the white man can not do without your labour.... In his opinion it would be better for us natives to start and form a society as soon as possible and be organised, and when things come right strike for our rights."¹⁰⁹ (It was left to Bunting, at the following meeting, to warn that "we must not think we are not going to have difficulty and trouble, but we

must be strong and persevere and withstand any difficulty which presents itself"..)¹¹⁰

If these positions were adopted by Dunbar, they illustrate the inability of syndicalism to come to grips with the real dynamics of state power. To the extent that it presented a programme, it amounted to "organise and strike, and win". Neither did the theoretical grounding of the ISL equip it to come to grips with the dynamics of spontaneous class action. The action which did develop acts as a pole of attraction to those within the organisation with an orientation to black workers. But the general theoretical vision which they have brings into sharpest focus not the dynamics of that action and its objective meaning in the class struggle, but the place which it occupies along an idealised measuring guage of class consciousness. The main positive point made about the action is not that it reflects the actual development of the workers' movement - but that it can be used to propagandise about the need for organisation and solidarity - the ISL's abstract vision of these things being seen as the only way in which the workers' movement can actually develop.

From its formation, the ISL had expressed a strong opposition to nationalism. The International, in January 1916, criticises "Guild Socialism" for its combination with "the effete and ever treacherous dogmas of nationalism", arguing that "to wean the workers from the latter, Marx considered to be the first step to freedom".¹¹¹ This critique of nationalism arose in the context of the ISL's opposition to the war, and to the policy of supporting "your own bourgeoisie" in the war. It strongly influenced the way in which the organisation approached the issue of African nationalism.

The rejection of nationalism and the deep political suspicion which the League had of the black petty bourgeoisie did not mean that it simply rejected the struggle for democratic demands, even where these were organisationally expressed under a petty bourgeois black leadership.¹¹² It specifically supported demands which it categorised collectively as "elevation of the native to the political and industrial status of the white".¹¹³ It is under the heading "The Pass Laws - Organise for their Abolition" that the nationalist leadership is vilified as constituting "the tame wing of the National Council of native attorneys and parsons".¹¹⁴

As the ISL became engaged in the practical struggle to win the support of black workers for industrial unionism and socialism, the critique of the politics of the black petty bourgeoisie grows in both vehemence and depth. In October 1917, the International writes:

"We would also warn our native fellow workers against the enemies of their colour. Just as the Rand Daily Mail is not a friend of the white workers because it happens to be in English, so Abantu Batho is not necessarily a friend of the native workers because it happens to print in Zulu or Sotho. The capitalist has ways and means of subsidising all papers.

"What the native worker should remember is that there is no colour line in the working class, however much some hireling Labourites draw that line. The interests of a native wage-earner is not with his native property owner or native spokesman subsidised by the Corner House, but with the white workers who fight capitalism of any colour.... Our call to native workers is different to any other. We call upon them to organise industrially and fight for themselves.... And the native workers are beginning to realise the newness, the truth of the message of industrial solidarity, for they are responding to the call, and will not heed the voice of the Corner House itself in the lamb's skin of Abantu Batho."¹¹⁵

The black petty bourgeoisie is seen and portrayed as an obstacle to industrial unionism and hence as an obstacle to the core of the strategy of the ISL:

"To get anything in this capitalist world you must organise, organise. It is not enough to meet in a room or on a market square.... Many holy men, perhaps the editor of Abantu Batho among them, will hold up horrified hands at the thought of natives organising, except under the tame wing of the National

Council of native attorneys and parsons. Others who recognise the degradation of the Pass Laws will say the remedy is too drastic. But we tell you, fellow workers, that not only is it good to organise for the sake of getting grievances remedied, but that the one way in which the natives of SA can uplift themselves morally and mentally, is by combining in the industrial field. Industrial combination is not a 'regrettable necessity', it is not a weapon to take up with a wry face, it is the highest, most elevating, most inspiring form of human association, and at the one and the same time, the most powerful weapon on the face of the earth; stronger than all cannons and bayonets...."¹⁶(This article came shortly after a meeting of the group which formed the IWA, at which Bunting had asked the workers (and police spies) present about their views of the NNC.)¹⁷

The International expressed the position of the organisation in this way:

"Kautsky says somewhere that Socialists have always been on the side of genuine emancipation movements such as the Polish or Irish movements. Such instinctive sympathy with any agitation designed to shake off any chains, even if complicated with racial and sectional interests must be felt among natives all over South Africa at that Native Affairs Administration Bill of 1917 now before Parliament."¹⁸

But, from the abstract position in terms of which the organisation is operating, every political development is

evaluated in terms of how it fits into an idealised conception of class solidarity and class organisation. Viewed from that perspective, the "limitations" of the spontaneous struggles of black workers stood out. From the same perspective, the politics of the NNC was clearly a dismal failure.¹¹⁹ The most vehement criticism of the nationalist leadership is made, not because they take up the struggle for democratic demands, but because of their inability - or opposition - to organise such a struggle, and organise it in a way which promotes the idealised view of working class solidarity.¹²⁰

A broadly similar view is taken of Afrikaner nationalism. In an editorial under the heading "Do we want a Republic?" International recognises grievances on the basis of which Afrikaner Nationalists are making gains amongst whites, and portrays nationalism as an obstacle to the real solution of those grievances:

"Nothing now can make any change at all affecting the workers short of a Socialist Republic - i.e. the industrially organised workers taking charge as workers of the Administration of social needs for the good of all. That is the only revolution pending now.... It does not follow that the Nationalist agitation does not offer help to the workers. It does.... But we cannot allow the working class movement to be deflected from the great goal by agitation for a change in the mere veneer of tyranny and in the personnel of the tyrants.... If the workers will only recognise their industrial solidarity, they will solve all the Nationalist grievances and emancipate humanity into the bargain."¹²¹

CP historians are critical of the ISL in two areas:- its rejection of African nationalism, and its syndicalism.¹²² Our analysis thus far suggests that neither of these criticisms gets to the core problem of the ISL - its theoretical method, and the political method associated with it. In the case of nationalism, it is an oversimplification to portray the ISL as simply dismissing African nationalism, or simply conflating the nationalisms of oppressed and oppressor. The ISL did recognise and make clear its recognition of distinctions between the two - even if it did not consistently take account of that recognition. What was common in its position on the two nationalisms was the method in terms of which it understood them, and then responded to them politically. In both cases, nationalism was evaluated in terms of an abstract theory which did not get to grips with the real political dynamics of the situation - and, in both cases, nationalism "failed".

As far as the syndicalism of the organisation was concerned, the central point is not the content of its policies - but the way in which syndicalism came to be adopted and used. The organisation slid into syndicalism because it lacked an alternative theoretical framework and theorised strategy. The tactic of industrial unionism filled the void created by the absence of that strategy. Racism, working class solidarity, the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviets - all of these could be "explained" and contained under the blanket abstractions of syndicalism. In the

process, the real political implications of using abstract theory as the analytical basis for political action was made clear. Under the abstract theory, political action could become a set of empiricist responses and ad hoc adaptations to developments as they appeared to be. These could be seen as consistent with the abstract theory - although they were not necessarily guided by it. Where there was an attempt to use abstract theory as if it were a concrete programme, the result was the misleading confusion put forward within the IWA.

This situation persisted even while a more concrete, materialist position was beginning to be developed inside the organisation. But the tension between the two main tendencies, and between several different contradictory positions, was not clarified, persisting beneath the surface. Meanwhile, the actual course of events - the failure of white workers to respond to the ISL calls, the emergence of the IWA and the surge of working class resistance - promoted the orientation which some had always urged, towards the black workers. That orientation was strengthened by the tentative development of a more materialist theory. The underlying process of proletarianisation was identified; the fact that the majority of the working class was black was recognised. In retrospect, these may be self-evident truths. But it is testimony to the abstraction of the ISL from the situation in which they were seeking to operate that they were not actually self-evident at the time. Members of the organisation did not know that blacks were irreversibly working class, and a majority of the working class, because these were

not factors immediately within their experience, or visible from the perspective of the white labour tradition, or illuminated by an abstract theory.

After negotiations during the course of 1921, The Communist Party of South Africa (CP/CPSA) was formed in July, and its first conference was held at the end of that month.¹²³ The CP was formed out of a merger between the ISL, the Cape Town Social Democratic Federation, the Cape Town Communist Party, the Cape Town Jewish Socialist Society, Poalei Zion, and the Marxian Club of Durban.¹²⁴ The ISL was by far the biggest of these organisations, with many more members than the rest combined,¹²⁵ and it made the greatest political input into the new CP.

In the lead-up to the formation of the CP the need for an orientation to black workers was more firmly recognised than at any stage in the history of the ISL. The great enthusiasm for the Bolshevik Revolution, misunderstood as it had been, and the tentative beginnings of the development of a more materialist theoretical perspective meant that there was a strong receptivity to Marxist positions - not without similarities to the way in which there had earlier been a receptivity to syndicalism. But that was not the only legacy which the ISL brought to the new CP. Abstract theory continued to mould the perspective through which the organisation viewed developments. Beneath the surface was a set of underlying, unresolved conflicts and differences. The CP was formed at a time when the impact of a sustained period of

action by black workers was still fresh. Individual morality, the influence of syndicalism, the tentative beginnings of a materialist theoretical perspective, abstract theory and the associated empiricist response to what was immediately visible, had combined to promote acceptance of an orientation to black workers. Very soon, these varying bases of the ISL/CP position were to lead the new CP in a different direction.

The development of the workers' movement, spearheaded by the class action of black workers, had created the basis for wider organisation of the working class. It had also served to draw the attention of elements within the black petty bourgeoisie to the working class. In July 1920, the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union was formed at a conference in Bloemfontein,¹²⁶ drawing together Kadalie's ICU, and a group of black workers led by Msimang, who had organised around a minimum wage demand in Bloemfontein in 1919.¹²⁷ In the wave of action which had developed, more and more workers collectively experienced the mood of rising combativity which was shared amongst broader layers of the working class. But, particularly for those taking action, their experience, in the majority of cases, was also that of state attack and defeat. For as long as action continued to develop, the impact of the defeats was made secondary. The miners' strike led the movement forward onto a new level. But the vicious defeat of that strike, together with the cumulative impact of other defeats, served to suppress the rising movement. Action died down; the urban petty bourgeoisie, no longer under the pressure of the forward movement of black workers, became absorbed in consultations over the new Native Affairs Bill (which became law in 1920);¹²⁸ in the same situation, the ICWU fell apart because of personal differences between its leaders.¹²⁹

But the impact of the 1920 strike, and the general rise of action by black workers continued to play a part in the thinking of at least some elements of the state. The Native Recruiting Corporation commented:

"The native strike is now over and the natives have returned to work. It must not be assumed that all the labourers have returned in a contented frame of mind.... It is now essential that every effort should be made to arrive at some means whereby the present conditions of labour amongst natives employed on the mines can be ameliorated.... [Should this not be done] there is no doubt that strikes amongst natives will recur and each successive strike will be better organised than the last, bringing about not only serious disorganisation to the Mining Industry but to the whole industrial life of South Africa."¹³⁰

In the aftermath of the strike, the mine-owners faced the pressure of a sharply falling gold premium,¹³¹ and turned to the question of cutting costs. In 1920, 21,455 whites on the mines earned more than ten million pounds;¹³² 179,987 blacks earned just below six million pounds. Any further economic attacks against black miners brought the threat of "a better organised strike", and the black miners were not organised behind a leadership which could be relied upon to try to avoid a confrontation. The Chamber turned to the white miners. In negotiations between August and December 1921, the white unions conceded the transfer of some minor functions from whites to blacks, as well as a small wage reduction.¹³³ These concessions can only have served to promote the confidence and determination of the employers. On 8 December 1921, the Chamber announced that negotiations with the unions were proceeding too slowly. It demanded a reduction of wages of the highest paid (of approximately 17%), the abolition of the

Status Quo Agreement, and a blank cheque to re-organise underground work. According to the Chamber, this would mean 2,000 redundancies.¹³⁴ The South African Industrial Federation (SAIF) leadership was rapidly forced into a confrontation position. Delegates from the coal mines (which had been targetted first) met on 31 December 1921 and agreed on an immediate strike. The Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) organised a ballot of all unions affected, with an official recommendation for strike action. On 10 January 1922, after a ballot heavily in favour of strike action, white workers on the gold mines joined the coal miners' strike.¹³⁵

There was no enthusiasm for extending the strike further from the SAIF leadership.¹³⁶ The centralised drive for picketing and organising the strike generally came from the Council of Action - a body formed and supported by the left and rank and file militants, with Andrews in a leading position.¹³⁷ In March, when the Chamber withdrew recognition from the SAIF,¹³⁸ the leadership collapsed completely, and decided to hold a ballot with a recommendation to return to work.¹³⁹ At this stage, leadership of the strike passed into the hands of the Committee of Action. This body consisted of the Council of Action and commando leaders (most of whom had risen from commandants to generals, in the course of the strike). The Committee of Action organised a mass demonstration outside the Trades Hall which physically held the SAIF leadership hostages of the rank and file, a situation which partly prevailed politically as well.

"In the late afternoon Joe Thompson, acting President of the SAIF came out onto the balcony of the Trades Hall to announce that the meeting had decided to vote for a general strike. The gathering noisily demanded to know when it would start. Thompson could not answer this. The men of the commandos, their patience strained, told him to go back and find out. The delegates would be held there until they supplied the answer.

"Thompson went inside and returned to announce that the general strike had, in fact begun. It would be conducted by a Council of Five.... The Council of Five promptly abdicated and handed authority for running the strike over to the Committee of Action unconditionally."¹⁴⁰

The Council of Action failed to maintain any firm organisational relationship or establish its political leadership over the commando leaders. Andrews recounts that on 8 March, at a crucial stage in the conflict, when the general strike had just been decided, the commando leaders held a secret meeting from which he was excluded.¹⁴¹ This reflected, at a general level, the different unco-ordinated relationships between the strike committees and the commandos in different areas. In some cases, the commandos were organised miners. The overall leader of the commandos was a retired miner.¹⁴² The first commando to be set up, the Putfontein Commando - which was also the first to be involved in any military action - consisted of small-holders.¹⁴³ There is no evidence to suggest that it was linked in any organised way to any strike committee - and certainly nothing suggests that it was

operating under the leadership of any strike committee. At one stage, there were moves towards the establishment of trade union-based industrial, rather than regional, commandos. But these moves do not seem to have been carried forward into the actual establishment of any trade union based commandos.¹⁴⁴

From the time of the "abdication of the Council of Five", control of developments came into the hands of the commando generals. On 10 March, after the secret meeting of the generals, an armed rebellion began.¹⁴⁵ Military skirmishes took priority over attempts to actually organise a general strike¹⁴⁶ - and the military skirmishes led eventually to a military defeat.

In the course of the strike, three demands came to the fore - defence of wages, defence of the colour bar, and the removal of the Smuts government. The first two of these issues were relatively clear-cut, and there was complete agreement by all forces actively involved in building the strike. The last posed more difficulties. Would Smuts be overthrown in an armed uprising by the commandos? Would he be defeated by a workers' general strike? Would he be defeated at elections? As the generals took over the leadership of the movement, and the armed rebellion began, the first of these options effectively displaced the second. In reality, that process meant that the real prospects of defeating Smuts came to depend more and more on a military strategy. From the outset of the strike, faced with the different options, the majority of the LP and National Party (NP)

leadership focussed on elections.¹⁴⁷ The endorsement of this approach by the SAIF leadership opened the door to politicians, who found a receptive audience, as they called for the defeat of Smuts. The military defeat of the movement, and the ending of the strike which followed upon it,¹⁴⁸ opened the way for the electoral approach to dominate. The basis for this had already been laid, during the course of the strike. Tielman Roos, at a strike meeting in Germiston said: "Your best strike weapon is the General Election. At the next one you will sweep the Smuts government from power."¹⁴⁹

The general arguments put forward by the SAIF in support of the strike have been described in this way:

"The trade unionists proclaimed that Rand Workers were fighting a national battle against Colour and Colour-blind capitalism; and that it was the duty of all white South Africans to assist, either by demanding a Parliamentary settlement in the strikers' favour, or by refusing to aid the government should it actively side against the white workers."¹⁵⁰

During the strike, Labour and Nationalist politicians shared platforms.¹⁵¹ Hendrikz, the acting secretary of the MWU told demonstrators early in the strike to vote for Hertzog or Creswell.¹⁵² A Labour MP made a dramatic appeal for the establishment of a provisional government and the formation of a Republic.¹⁵³ Miners who had been born overseas and Afrikaners stood together in a united movement of struggle.¹⁵⁴ Militarily, the state had defeated the strike, but that defeat had not immediately

crushed the mood of resistance. The effect of the strike and its defeat was to establish conditions in which that movement could be turned into an strengthened electoral base for the NP and LP. On the basis of a common interest in defending the colour bar and defeating Smuts through the parliamentary process, a de facto agreement was being established between the LP and NP.

In 1917, when a dispute between the SAMWU and employers had developed around the same issues of wages and the colour bar, Bunting had written:

"In this matter, the SAMWU are fighting a hopeless rearguard action. Instead of labour fighting labour, surely our game is to fraternize against the common enemy and fight the exploiter not the exploited. Indeed if we whites as a class are to continue to depend for our position on the exploitation of natives, we are ourselves driven to the side of the exploiters. A union of skilled craftsmen may for the time, enforce one concession or another, although even such a gain is more precarious in this country than elsewhere, for here they have less sympathy with and from the unskilled. But they can never win the One Thing Needful, the means of production, for they are only a fraction of the workers who, as a whole, can alone displace the private owners of capital. And it is futile to expect the natives to organise just to win victories for the whites.... The coming motive power of Labour is in the hands of the unskilled. This anti-colour demand can not, by any sophistry be classed as the Labour movement."¹⁵⁵

Referring to the role of the CP in the 1922 strike, Lerumo writes:

"[T]he Party could not take a detached view. The great majority of its members were within the existing movement of white labour; they felt that they could not stand aside from a major clash between their fellow-workers and the major imperialist concentration in the country, backed by the hated Smuts government."¹⁵⁶

Simons writes: "The fight was on. The duty of the communists was to guide it correctly, instil a revolutionary consciousness in the strikers, and lead them to victory."

How did the Party approach this task?¹⁵⁷ -

A manifesto was issued by the Party at the end of January in which the basis of its position was laid out: "Without necessarily identifying itself with every slogan heard in the strike, the Communist Party of South Africa gladly offers its assistance to the Strike Committee, convinced that essentially, this is a fight against the rule of the capitalistic class...." It warned against blind faith in "the landowners", and that "the middle class, prone as they are to face both ways may prove broken reeds." The manifesto continued: "Our only permanent allies are our fellow workers - irrespective of race or colour...."¹⁵⁸

In the course of the struggle, the strikers drew some support from landowners and the middle class. Certainly the racist LP, NP and SAIF leaders were not going to lead the strikers in the

search for an alliance with black workers. The central slogan of the strike demanded the defence of a "White South Africa". One of the declared purposes of some of the commandos was to make sure that there was no "trouble" from black workers.¹⁵⁹ Could the CP give a content, in the actual situation, to its propaganda in favour of non-racial working class solidarity?

Apart from limited and abstract propaganda, the Party failed to take up a political struggle against the racist defence of the status quo. There were three major reasons for this. Firstly, the strike brought to the fore the white labour tradition, aspects of which had persisted within the organisation through the history of the ISL into the formation of the CP. White workers, for the first time since the formation of the ISL, were actually acting in a way which could be made to fit the model in terms of which they were the revolutionary vanguard. Secondly, the Party actually supported the retention of the status quo, although its most recent history states that "the Party could not support the perpetuation of the industrial colour bar".¹⁶⁰ In November 1921, the InternationalP argued that white workers were "perfectly justified in fighting to keep up the numbers and pay of holders of blasting certificates".¹⁶¹ In the course of the strike and in its aftermath, the position changed. It was not simply the right of workers to defend their own jobs and conditions - but the right of white workers to defend racial access to these jobs as a principle, which the Party came, effectively, to support. Jones argues that despite "the undeniable justice of the capitalist

plea for native advancement" (sic), the colour bar provided "the best possible condition for the co-operation of white with black". "The attack on the Colour Bar threatened to put an end to this ... state."¹⁶² In February, after the breakdown of an attempt by Smuts to negotiate a settlement conference,¹⁶³ the CP accused the AEU of a "distinct weakening on the question of the status quo agreement".¹⁶⁴ The basis for this argument - where it was not the simple operation of the white labour tradition - was the belief that, if the colour bar were broken, blacks would be made to do skilled work at their existing rates of pay. i.e. undercut whites. Bunting also clearly believed that opposition to the colour bar from black workers would amount to an alliance with the mineowners. The capacity of black workers to organise and fight for their demands, made visible by the 1920 strike, appears not to have been considered by the CP. In accordance with the white labour tradition, the black workers were viewed as passive bystanders. As far as breaking down the racial divisions in the working class were concerned, the most that the black workers could do, in the view of the CP, was to support the white workers and their demands. Bunting wrote: "Wages, then, not colour is the point to strike about and so far as this is a strike to maintain wages, it deserves the whole-hearted support of all Labour, including the Coloured and Native workers themselves".¹⁶⁵

As far as the white workers were concerned, the most that they could do, in the CP's vision of class solidarity, was to realise the necessity and value of that support. The immediate basis for that unity was to be the demands being made by the white workers,

and a united struggle against capitalism:

"To maintain the 'white standard' to build a 'white South Africa' is impossible under capitalism, whose nature is to degrade every class it employs. Then away with it! How? By dint of the utmost solidarity of labour against the common enemy: nothing less can win." ¹⁶⁶

Thirdly, the CP analytically reduces the subjective basis and political leadership of the struggle to a part of its objective basis. Amongst all the other aspects of the strike, a group of workers was seeking to defend their jobs and their wages. Analytically, that aspect of the strike could be separated from others. But, in the actual way in which the strike was being fought and led, it did not exist separately. Nor could the one aspect actually be separated from the other without all racist aspects of the strike being clearly taken up and opposed. In its manifesto, the Party made clear that "it did not necessarily associate itself with every slogan heard in the strike".¹⁶⁷ In the actual context of the strike, that imprecise statement could not provide the necessary clarity. Nor, in fact, would the other positions taken by the Party allow it to do so. Restricting the scope of what it could say, at each point, was the fact that it actually supported the racist basis of the strike - the industrial colour bar. The task which the CP set itself was not to define racism out of existence, but to lead a political struggle against it. But the method which it employed, and the positions which it adopted, obstructed its capacity to pursue the

latter, and promoted the former.

Earlier, the abstract theoretical method of the ISL had led to Soviets being defined as industrial unions. It had led to some members of the League seeking to use the abstract principles of syndicalism as if they could be put forward as an immediate programme of action. Now it led the CP to define the immediate political content of the strike out of existence - and to put forward to black workers, as an immediate basis for solidarity with white workers, the need to support the racist colour bar. In a similar process, the commandos became the Red Guards.¹⁶⁸ The next major result of that method was for the Party to see a racist popular front alliance between the LP and the NP as a workers' united front.

The attempt to actually develop socialist organisation, and the confrontation with reality which that had in part created, had promoted the embryonic beginnings of the development of a more concrete theory within the ISL. But the underlying political foundation persisted - and remained basically unchallenged. Against this background, the position which the CP adopted in response to the 1922 strike can be seen as reflecting the continuity of underlying political features. Because the Party was being guided by abstract theory, its actual policies in the situation were an ad hoc adaptation to events as they unfolded, with socialist propaganda as an added element.

The strike was to become an important part of the ongoing process

by which Afrikaner nationalism sunk political roots amongst white workers. Its more immediate political result was an electoral alliance between the LP and the NP, another part of that same process. The policies of the CP, in relation to both of these developments, meant that the Afrikaner Nationalists were able to strengthen their influence amongst white workers, without a clear political challenge from the CP.

CHAPTER TWO

1921 - 1929

Generally, left-wing analyses of the 1922 strike and the Pact which followed it concentrate on making two points:- that the defeat of the strike laid the basis for the incorporation of white workers, through, amongst other things, the framework of the Industrial Conciliation Act;¹ and secondly, that the electoral victory of the Pact government represented a shift in hegemony between different capitals, or fractions of capital.²

The fractionalist analysis draws attention to the conflict within the ruling class at the time. It provides a description of part of the course of political events which followed. But it overlooks an important part of the political dynamic in the situation. Analytically, it may be argued with historical hindsight that the balance of class forces in the situation was such as to make the course of events which followed the strike inevitable. But for that argument to be put forward, a much more precise analysis of the balance of class forces - the balance **between** classes - than anything which has been put forward by the fractionalists is required. And such an approach would have to take account of the fact that, even if a political process is pre-determined by unchangeable objective conditions, that does not mean that the process occurs without a dynamic movement at

all levels, including the subjective. The change in government did not come about as a simple and immediate consequence of conflict between different sections of the ruling class, or a direct reflection of the needs of different capitals. It came about, in part, because of the political reaction by the leaders of the organisations of white workers, and by white workers themselves, following the defeat of the strike.

Lewis argues that the "defeat of the 1922 General Strike was a crushing blow to the labour movement". He points to the fall in union membership, the withdrawal of trade union recognition, and individual victimisations on the mines.³ The victimisation of militants has an impact which extends beyond the individuals concerned. Trade union membership fell sharply, from 108,242 in 1921 to 81,861 in 1922.⁴ It was clear that, amongst some of those most directly involved in the struggle, there was demoralisation. But the mood of white workers more generally in the immediate aftermath of the strike cannot be immediately deduced from these facts alone.

In the concrete situation, several issues were objectively placed before the white workers and their organisations: Would the workers follow the lead of the NP and LP, and seek to win their demands through Parliament? Would the belief that white workers could secure their needs through action and organisations which excluded black workers be challenged? Would the white workers and their leaders respond to the situation by an aggressive struggle to build their organisations? It was by the political response to

questions such as these that the precise meaning of the defeat of the strike came to be determined. And the actual responses which emerged showed that real choices were possible, and were being made.

Andrews, in a lecture on the history of the labour movement, described the impact of the strike in this way:

"One result of the defeat of the workers of the Transvaal in 1922 was a considerable shrinkage in the membership of most of the Unions, and a widespread feeling of hopelessness and defeat. The phrase on the lips of the majority of Trade Union officials at this time was 'never again'. The Government under General Smuts took advantage of this sentiment, and in 1924 passed the Industrial Conciliation Act, almost without opposition. Most of the trade union officials ... supported the Bill."⁵

As we have seen already, the basis had been laid for politicians of the NP and LP to exploit the situation created by the defeat of the strike. The retreating and collapsing SAIF leadership provided no lead for workers.⁶ But it is not clear that the defeat of the strike meant the simultaneous crushing of the mood of resistance amongst white workers generally. Within a short period, the LP was to receive an increased share of the vote,⁷ as workers attempted, as they saw it, to carry on the fight against Smuts. Nor was the question of alliances unambiguously answered. As we have seen, an alliance did develop between the LP and the NP - and represented by that electoral alliance was an alliance

between white workers and sections of the petty bourgeoisie and capital. But the Pact, and the class alliance which it represented, provoked an opposition from within the LP.⁸ Creswell's attempt to have the socialist goal deleted from the LP programme was defeated at the Party conference in 1923.⁹ And a general meeting of white miners in Johannesburg in September 1923 argued that the constitution of the union should be changed, in order to allow black membership (although in separate branches).¹⁰ Political choices were being made. What policies did the CP pursue in this crucial period, in which the precise impact of the defeat of the strike was still being determined?

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The first Congress of the CP had decided, by 40 votes to 29, that "a Communist Party could at no time identify itself with any nationalist or other bourgeois party, and cannot support its platform."¹¹ The International described the Pact as "an alliance between bourgeois nationalism and labour imperialism".¹² Despite this, the CP decided, at its Congress in 1923, to support the Pact.¹³ The propaganda of the Party makes quite clear that there was a recognition that the Pact was a bourgeois political formation which would not meet the needs of workers:

"Whether a purely Nationalist, or a Nat-Lab government the workers will rapidly discover that the administration of the country will not be materially different to that at the present time."¹⁴

"It is of course quite obvious that leading members of the Pact have no sympathy with working class aspirations...."¹⁵

"The alliance between Republicans and Imperialists, reactionary

landowners and industrial workers cannot result in any material benefits to the wage-earning class...."¹⁶

Nonetheless, the position of support for the Pact persists.

A deep pessimism about the political consciousness of white workers was reflected in explanations for the Party's support of the Pact:

"As Communists we are aware of the largely futile character of parliamentary institutions and part of our work is to discredit parliament and bourgeois 'democracy', but in order to bring home to the workers the impossibility of effecting their emancipation through parliament they will probably have to go through the bitter disillusionment of a Labour/Nationalist government in power."¹⁷

It is portrayed as being necessary, because of the illusions which workers have in the NP and LP:

"We know that Hertzog and Creswell with their foggy ideas of the causes of the ills of society will fail to accomplish what they promise to do. Hertzog's nationalism will not carry the workers very far, and Creswell's imperialism will hamper him at every turn. Nevertheless, it is necessary that the ground should be cleared. It is necessary that the [Pact] advocated by the Nat-Labour combination should be put to the test. Only through an exhaustive process of disillusionment does it appear that the workers will be convinced that no solution of the problems confronting them is possible within the capitalist system. The

sooner nationalism and Labourism is given a trial, the sooner will it be found out."¹⁸

At times, the Pact is supported, not as a political good in itself, but as the better of bad options: "The only alternative at this election seems to be to vote for Smuts and the Chamber of Mines. One has to choose the lesser of two evils, and on this occasion at least, it would appear to be the Hertzog-Creswell combination."¹⁹

At times, it is argued that it is a necessary stage in the progress towards socialism:

"In a country so politically backward as South Africa from the working class point of view (although advanced from the capitalist point of view) the defeat of the SAP government will in itself mean quite an appreciable step in the march towards complete emancipation."²⁰

"'Vote Pact' not for the sake of the 'Pact' but for the sake of the working class as a step towards workers control of the whole means of production and self-determination in a workers republic".²¹

"[T]he defeat of an avowedly capitalist government and the substitution of a government with working class sympathies is a necessary step in the advance towards Communism."²²

And, at times, "inexorable economic laws"²³ were adduced to explain that the movement of the white workers was consistently to the left.

The reaction of the Party to the Pact arises for three main reasons. Firstly, there was a deep demoralisation amongst elements within the Party who had, in the heady days of March 1922, believed that the white workers were beginning to play out their role as the revolutionary vanguard. Underlying different "explanations" is the assessment that the white workers, after the defeat of the strike, cannot move beyond a backward position. Secondly, the method of the Party, on immediate political positions as opposed to general propaganda, results in a tendency to follow, not an attempt to lead. The white workers appeared to be moving backwards from the advanced positions which the Party believed had been reached in 1922. The Party moved backwards behind them. Thirdly, support for the Pact appeared to the Party to be the equivalent of the united front position which the Comintern was advocating generally.²⁴

Andrews points to the "widespread feeling of hopelessness and defeat".²⁵ Lerumo sums up the feeling:

"The Party was bitterly disappointed in the results and consequences of the strike. Despite the sacrifices and heroism of the Communists, it was not to them but to the chauvinist Labour and Nationalist Parties that the white workers turned, in their anger and bitterness against Smuts and his Party.... Many trade union militants left the Communist Party, to throw their weight behind the Labour-Nationalist alliance. Ivon Jones wrote ... 'We have lost the trade unionists.... as a cold matter of fact there is no room for a CP in white South Africa except as the watchdog

of the native....'"²⁶

At this crucial stage, then, the Party was plunged into a mood of demoralisation - a mood which was fuelled by the false optimism and misassessment which it had made in the course of, and immediately after, the strike. When the completely idealised expectations in the white workers failed to materialise, the Party lost confidence in the possibility of immediately achieving even sober goals - such as drawing a class line in white elections. Even before the impact of the strike has been fully determined, the Party attributes to white workers a new backwardness - a retreat from their vanguard role in the "most glorious event in the history of white civilisation in South Africa."²⁷

Viewing developments from this starting point, the Party was unable to recognise the particular conjunctural significance of the moves within the MWU to allow black members, and of the opposition to the Pact within the LP. At the beginning of 1924, the International reported that the proposal was coming from within the MWU that it should be opened to black workers.²⁸ The Party welcomed the move, and called for it to be carried through with "audacity and rapidity".²⁹ At the same time, the initiative was described as showing "signs of falling into line with the rest".³⁰ There is no sign that the Party launched or participated in any campaign to promote the measure. The tentative moves towards the beginnings of an alliance between black and white miners fell prey to a combination of pressure from the Chamber,

the bourgeois media, and the established union leadership.³¹

The Party strongly opposed the opposition to the Pact within the LP. At the end of November 1923, the International wrote:

"It is up to all the SALP branches to ridicule and repudiate the dunghill crowings of some Cape Labourites and secure for South Africa its only chance by ratifying the Pact at the annual conference."³²

The CP attributed the LP opposition to the Pact to vote-mongering (which it believed was aimed at the "Coloured vote" in the Cape).³³ There is little doubt that this was the basis of opposition from some leading Cape LP members. But the Party made no attempt to assess the extent to which that opposition extended beyond leaders and elected representatives to working class members and supporters of the LP. And, in its support for the Pact, it cut itself off, not just from the base of opposition inside the LP, but also from the mass of black workers.³⁴ That such opposition existed was reflected in a press report, carried by the International, of a meeting of black workers:

"Mr Charles Pearce, MLA for Liesbeek is reported by Reuter to have addressed a meeting of native workers at Ndabeni, when the meeting unanimously adopted a long resolution viewing with great alarm the amalgamation [sic] of the National and Labour Parties, whose policies have been as different from one another as the North is from the South Pole [sic], and resolving to oppose the 'Pact' candidates strenuously on the grounds that its only

effects are

- a. lust for power without any policy whatsoever
- b. an anti-native and anti-Coloured programme with the view to defranchising non-Europeans in the Cape
- c. to reduce non-European workers in this country to a state tantamount to economic strangulation....

If he did denounce the Pact, we are of the opinion that he is mistaken in his tactics."³⁵

During the course of the strike, the LP/SAIF leadership had laid the basis for a focus on the electoral option - and the defeat of the strike made it easier for them to exploit the situation to their own electoral ends. The same leadership was telling the white workers that they needed to look for allies - and the allies presented to them were the NP. Both of these "answers" served to undermine any commitment to "independent" class organisation. And, as Andrews has pointed out, the union leadership retreated after the strike, making infinitely more difficult the option of any political strengthening of the white unions. The policies of the leadership meant that, within all their organisations, the white workers were being presented with only one option: "Vote for the Pact, and win your demands through Parliament." The CP tried to combat the movement away from the unions with a campaign, launched at the beginning of 1924, under the slogan "Back to the Unions".³⁶ At the same time, the prospects of white workers actually turning with increased energy to independent unionism was being undermined by parliamentarism and

support for a popular frontist class alliance of their leadership. On each of these issues the CP was, in part, effectively endorsing and campaigning for the policy adopted by the leadership of the white workers. At the same time, consistently with the white labour tradition, the Party focussed its attention on the elections - elections from which the majority of the working class was excluded. And it continued to approach those elections from the starting point, as it saw it, of the white workers.

Simons argues that "[t]he communists were wrong in supposing that defeat would sharpen class consciousness, drive out national or racial antagonism, and imprint the moral of working class solidarity".³⁷ Defeat alone could not do these things. But the impact of the defeat opened up questions for the white workers, which, depending on the way in which they were answered, could have begun to challenge some of the racist divisions within the working class. The CP, in its support for the colour bar, had effectively supported a key basis of racism during the strike. In its aftermath, by its support for the Pact, it came effectively to endorse the answers presented to the white workers by the social democrats and Afrikaner nationalists. In so doing, it was endorsing key aspects of the policies which were helping to turn the defeat of the strike into a much wider defeat.

What impact a different policy by the CP would have had cannot be precisely measured. Amongst white workers, it is likely that the most that could have been achieved was the strengthening of a

foundation for the development of a minority non-racist left-wing within some white unions. That, in itself, would have been a major historical development. For that to have happened, and for the approach to the Pact to have been determined by the interests of the working class generally, the CP would have had to approach things from a different perspective. The real significance of a different CP policy would have been the development of that perspective. But the importance for this study of recognising the real political dynamic is not in measuring what might have been. It is in demonstrating that the policies pursued by the Party were based on real political choices. And that those policies, and the way in which it saw developments were, in themselves, sufficient to preclude the Party from achieving the objectives which it set itself at the beginning of the strike.

The CP decision at its 1923 conference to apply for affiliation to the LP, and its support for the Pact, were theorised in terms of the Comintern policy of the united front.³⁸ The most recent CP history implies that by united front, the Party meant the rank and file movement between the Afrikaans and English members of the CP, NP and LP.³⁹ The *International* argued that the "united front against Smuts had first been planned by British and Dutch revolt leaders in the Fort".⁴⁰ There had been a united movement of opposition which drew together Afrikaans and English speaking workers, amongst whom there must have been supporters of different parties. But that movement did not exist without political leadership. And, particularly in the aftermath of the

strike, when the pressure of mass action had been removed, the leadership role was taken over by the NP and LP. Between these two parties, there was a formalised political alliance and electoral Pact - and it is to these, despite its clear desire for an alliance between the working class rank and file, that the CP gave its clear and repeated support.

Viewed abstractly, the Soviets had been seen as industrial unions. With the same perspective, support for an alliance between "bourgeois nationalism and labour imperialism" - a popular frontist alliance which specifically excluded the majority of the working class - came to be seen and "theorised " as a united front. In the case of its adoption of syndicalism, and then the united front, the ISL/CP had used a theory to explain positions which had, by and large, already been adopted. As the Party became more closely connected with and influenced by the Comintern, the theory which it derived from the Comintern came to to be used more as a guide to action.

In the 1924 election the SAP was defeated, with the Pact parties winning 81 seats (NP 63, LP 18) to the 63 of the SAP.⁴¹ In terms of the electoral agreement, and in accordance with the policy of the Afrikaner Nationalists of "leaving the white workers to the LP",⁴² the LP had been allocated the major urban working class constituencies. Analysts of the Pact have pointed out that, as far as the economic interests of the white workers generally were concerned, there was little immediate benefit derived from the Pact victory.⁴³ Those measures taken by the government which were of immediate benefit to a minority of white workers were designed politically to serve the interests of capital. They were aimed at buying-off and diffusing the movement, which had generated the 1922 strike and had continued, to "get rid of Smuts". Additionally, they promoted a situation where the maintenance of the position of the white worker came to depend on measures decided and taken by the state - in particular through employment and "protective" legislation.⁴⁴ A major political consequence of the different developments we have seen was the increased incorporation of already collaborationist white unions within formalised state structures.

One of the first moves by the new government was designed to strengthen its social base by opening up new jobs for white workers in the government services. In October 1924, Hertzog issued a circular letter instructing all government departments to substitute "civilised" for "uncivilised" labour, wherever possible.⁴⁵ "Civilised" meant a standard of living "generally recognised as tolerable from the usual European standpoint".⁴⁶ By

March 1926, 1,361 white labourers were directly employed under the scheme. The Department of Labour also provided subsidies for municipalities to make up the difference between the "the customary native daily wage and a fair minimum wage to European labour".⁴⁷ By September 1924, 2,906 white men were employed under this subsidised Municipal Relief Scheme.⁴⁸ Between 1924 and 1933, the number of whites employed by the Railways rose from 4,760 to 17,683. In the same period, the number of Africans employed fell from 37,564 to 22,008, and the number of Coloureds from 5,628 to 4,663.⁴⁹

The Status Quo agreement had been declared ultra vires by both Magistrates and the Appeal Courts during 1923.⁵⁰ The Pact government drew up legislation, passed in 1926 as the Mines and Works Amendment Act, laying down that blacks could not be employed in any job for which a certificate was required.⁵¹ The government promoted the Apprenticeship Act of 1922 in terms of which committees of employers and white unions had control over access to apprenticeships.⁵² The Wage Act of 1925 laid down minimum levels, with the multiple purposes of keeping wage levels down, limiting the scope for employers to employ cheaper black labour rather than whites, and creating a state structure through which the issue of wages could be taken up in future situations of conflict.⁵³ These different interests, and the generalised interest of capital in securing labour which is both skilled and cheap enough for profitability did not necessarily demand precisely the same result, as far as any particular Wage Board determination

was concerned.⁵⁴ *Forward* carried an assurance from a LP Cabinet Minister to white workers:

"The wage legalised by the Wages Board will have to be the wage that the employer will have to pay the employee engaged in any particular work, no matter what his colour may be.

"Needless to say, this will meet the wishes of every white worker in the country. I can not say the same for the employers, who have always used colour as a cloak to hide nefarious and scandalous underpayment for work done. In actual fact, the so-called 'colour' bar has been a 'white' bar in practice giving the black and coloured worker the right to 'freeze out' the more experienced white worker in very many avenues of employment."⁵⁵

The government had, in its own interests, to consolidate an electoral base amongst white workers. This meant that the government was under pressure to meet some of the demands - or at least convince white workers that it would do so in the future. Promises like that carried in *Forward* show the attempt to do the latter. It also had, as a government of capital, to try to "place a lid" on the demands and expectations of white workers which, for opportunist reasons, it had, within narrowly defined limits, promoted during the 1922 strike. The basis for the success of the Pact government in achieving these aims had been laid in the defeat of the mobilisation of the white workers, and in the political retreat by the union leadership which followed that defeat.

The bedrock of the government "labour relations" policy was the 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act.⁵⁶ This Act is primarily seen as the measure by which the government cut off the possibility of official recognition for black trade unions, and placed black workers in an uncertain legal position, as far as trade unionism was concerned.⁵⁷ It served two other major political purposes. It created a massive new legislative barrier to non-racial unionism. And it constructed a framework of state structures and channels into which, in the political conditions after the strike, the white unions were drawn.

The effect of participation within these was to promote the collaboration which was already taking place, and to place a whole range of official procedures in the path of any strike action. As Andrews put it:

"The ICA was ostensibly passed to provide a means of settling disputes and fixing wages and other working conditions without resort to strikes and lockouts. In reality it was designed to make strikes illegal for all essential services ... and in the case of other industries to provide machinery for conciliation boards, industrial councils and arbitration which had to be used before a strike could be legally entered into. In practice, these provisions made a successful legal strike almost an impossibility."⁵⁸

In conditions characterised by the political impact of the defeat of the 1922 strike, and particularly by the fact that the expectations of the white workers had been channelled into a

parliamentary direction, the measures taken by the government to control the movement of white workers were, for a period, relatively successful. During the period of the Pact government, and particularly in its first term, the number of white workers who were organised was relatively small. It was generally amongst unorganised white workers that the deepest grievances were held.⁵⁹ When the re-organisation of the white unions came, in 1924, it was at the initiative of Creswell, now Minister of Labour. Andrews explains Creswell's intentions:

"Colonel Creswell ... wanted some representative trade union body to give sanction to any industrial legislation that he might introduce, and to help him secure the smooth running of the Industrial Conciliation Act and Apprenticeship Acts."⁶⁰

At the beginning of 1925 the SA Association of Employees' Organisations was set up.⁶¹ At its first conference that year, the name was changed to the Trade Union Congress.⁶² From its inception, despite the plans of Creswell, the left had a strong representation on the leadership of the organisation, with Andrews being elected Secretary, and Glass (also a Communist) being elected Treasurer.⁶³ The strength of the left at the leadership level of the organised white workers was partly due to the fact that a number of right-wing unions did not initially affiliate to the federation.⁶⁴ And, despite important positions within some of the organisations of white workers, the left within the broader movement of white workers remained relatively small and isolated.⁶⁵

After the 1924 election, the LP called a special conference to confirm its intention of entering a Pact government.⁶⁶ The CP, for whom such a government had been variously "the only alternative", "the way forward for South Africa", and a necessary stage on the road to socialism, now changed its position, without explanation.⁶⁷ Having completely rejected the opposition to the Pact within the LP before the election, it now urged the LP special conference to reject entry into a Pact government.⁶⁸ Under the slogan: "Workers of the World, UNITE! But not with the forces of reaction!",⁶⁹ it urged the delegates to the LP special conference to oppose the formation of a Pact government. The Party, via a period in which it proposed to workers that they should support precisely those forces of reaction in a united front, now returned to the formal positions of pre-1922. The vague, often unexpressed, never clearly argued, dissatisfaction with continuing aspects of the white labour tradition came to the fore through the Young Communist League which, from its inception, had tried to focus on black youth at least equally to white.⁷⁰ The main branch of the YCL in Johannesburg had resolved, in the period that the Party generally was focussing on the Pact, that the "main task of the YCL of South Africa is the organisation of the native youth".⁷¹ Strong support for the 'new policy', of which Bunting was the leading proponent, also came from the Cape Town branch of the Party. It was from this branch that the major criticism relating to the policy on the Pact had come.⁷²

Different factors combined to promote a change of position within

the Party. The objective of getting rid of Smuts had been achieved; many of the white trade unionists who had been most strongly imbued with the white labour tradition had left the Party, in the aftermath of the strike; the pessimistic belief that white workers could not be broken from backward positions had the effect of turning some CP members towards blacks; and at a time when white militancy had been crushed, militancy was clearly developing amongst blacks.⁷³

The theoretical perspective of the Party had led it into its positions relating to the strike and the Pact. The same method led it into a renewed focus on the opposition movement amongst blacks - a movement which was becoming more organised and more visible. The orientation to black workers, developed before 1922, had been displaced by political events, not political argument or fully theorised strategic and tactical changes. As events changed, the orientation re-emerged. It was mustered into a majority position at the 1924 CP conference. The report on "Native Affairs" reflected the new approach:

"The Communist Party must recognise the necessity of supporting every form of native movement which tends to undermine or weaken capitalism, and must fight for race equality of the natives on the economic and political field. The Communist Party must use every instrument which will induce the trade unions to admit native workers. Failing this, it must organise the natives into unions of their own, and apply United Front tactics."⁷⁴

It was also decided to reverse the position of applying for affiliation to the LP. The Draft Programme which was adopted at the conference declared:

"The South African Labour Party, by endorsing the principle of capitalist democracy [sic], perpetuates the illusion that the salvation of the workers can be attained through capitalist institutions such as Parliament. By its failure to recognise adequately the exploited native workers it forfeits all claim to be a true working-class party."⁷⁵

Industrial development in the immediate post-war years had seen a large rise in the number of black workers in the major industrial centres. In 1911 there were 424,908 Africans in urban concentrations of more than 1,000. In 1921, the comparable figure was 551,188. In Cape Town the population rose from 1,541 to 7,438 in the same period; in Port Elizabeth from 6,926 to 15,221; in Johannesburg from 102,411 to 122,298; in Benoni from 16,353 to 32,415; in Vereeniging from 1,126 to 3,394. In 1911, there were 339 urban centres with more than 500 African inhabitants. In 1921, the number was 427.⁷⁶ As these workers became more and more firmly incorporated into capitalist industry and the social conditions of an urban proletariat, their expectations increasingly focussed on the universal needs of urban workers. In the rural areas, more and more blacks were being forced to seek work on white farms, or to "squat". In 1927, it was claimed that there were more than 1,618,000 natives living on white-owned land, as labour tenants, squatters, or wage labourers, of whom there were at least half a million.⁷⁷ As the South African Worker, (SAW) pointed out, the effect of Hertzog's Native Land policy was to bring labour tenants under the Masters and Servants Act and, in the vast majority of cases, their families as well.⁷⁸

These developments, together with crop failures in the reserves in 1924 and 1926⁷⁹ could only serve to promote the grievances of workers in capitalist agriculture, the movement out of the reserves and to the towns, the pressures on workers with wages in towns to subsidise those in the rural areas, and the growing number of urban unemployed. There were thus developing black

communities with growing demands in the urban areas, in a situation in which tribal and subsistence social and economic structures were being progressively destroyed and social welfare functions at even the most basic level were not being provided. In the same period, wages for at least some groups of black workers were being cut.⁸⁰ And in 1925 the taxation system for blacks was extended, so that every male native who reached 18 had to pay a poll tax of one pound a year and, in addition, the occupier of every hut or dwelling had to pay a poll tax of ten shillings a year.⁸¹

The cumulative effects of these processes was to create a groundswell of discontent and opposition throughout the country, most acutely amongst the interlocking groups who were caught up where the impact of social dislocation and economic hardship was most severe - migrant workers in the developing urban and semi-urban industrial areas whose families were beginning to live with them, peasants who could not survive off the land, and "squatters" on the farms. It was on this basis that the ICU was to be sustained and developed. The groundswell of opposition began to act upwards upon the black petty bourgeoisie, permeating through to the leaders of the ICU and the ANC - more markedly so and sooner in the case of the ICU, which had been established with a clear orientation to the urban and rural masses. While this process was in motion, there was a more immediate and obvious political pressure operating on the black petty bourgeoisie - the threat of oppressive measures directed specifically against them by the government.

In November 1925, Hertzog, who had the portfolio of Native Affairs, gave notice of his intention to introduce four segregation bills.⁸² One of the cumulative effects of these was to substantially challenge the precarious position in terms of which some blacks had access to ownership of land,⁸³ a place in the electoral system through the Cape franchise,⁸⁴ and were less restricted by pass laws.⁸⁵ These proposals were tabled in three bills relating to Africans,⁸⁶ and the Coloured Persons Rights Bill. There was not an immediate parliamentary majority for the Bills, which, as a package, required a two-thirds majority because they involved a change to an entrenched clause of the constitution. They were sent to a Select Committee;⁸⁷ in February 1929, shortly before the general election, the Native Parliamentary Representation Bill and the Coloured Persons Bill were tabled, and then withdrawn because of lack of the required two-thirds support.⁸⁸ But, as Johns points out, "[u]p to 1935, Hertzog's Native Bills hung as an ever-present threat over the African population...."⁸⁹ For the meantime, the threat of their introduction forced some elements within the petty bourgeoisie to look for channels of opposition; others were forced to look for better channels of co-operation.⁹⁰

The petty bourgeois leadership of the ICU and of the ANC came to articulate in a certain form this groundswell of opposition which spanned different classes and elements within classes of black South Africa.⁹¹ It was on this basis that Kadalie was to move to

the left, and become increasingly receptive to Communist influence. The CP, in turn, was shifting to a focus on the more visible movement of black opposition. Both the attitude of the CP to Kadalie, and his to Communism were to undergo sharp reversals.

Roux, who was a member of the CP at the time, argues that "the right of natives to form trade unions and political organisations was becoming a major issue in South African politics".⁹² He points to the growth of the ICU, whose industrial base was in Cape Town, and which, at the time of its conference in January 1923, claimed 18 branches, all in the Cape and South West Africa.⁹³ The fact that the Cape Town CP branch generally supported an orientation to blacks was not being reflected in any involvement in the ICU at that stage. It is a measure of the isolation of the CP from developments amongst black workers that the Cape Town branch, which was its second biggest, should have neither observers nor representatives at the 4th Annual Conference of the ICU in January 1924.⁹⁴ The International declares that the CP is "without information" as to whether the ICU is "a fit and proper body" to undertake those tasks relating to black workers which the CP regards as essential.⁹⁵ The result of this isolation was that, in its formative period, the ICU developed without any organised Communist influence.⁹⁶ The support by the CP for the colour bar in this period would have made such influence very difficult, as would some of the policies of the ICU leadership. Kadalie, who was initially an enthusiastic supporter of the Pact, was regarded, in the period before the elections and change of CP position, as little different from the conservative ANC leaders.⁹⁷

In January 1924, the International reports a speech of Kadalie's in which he repudiates Bolshevism:

"The African Native has been a law-abiding person from time immemorial. No African leader will join any political movement purporting to upset any Constitution."⁹⁸

During the course of 1924, as the basis for support for the Pact disappears, the strength of the "negrophilists" inside the Party builds up, and there is a consistent turn towards the ICU. At the same time, the political pressures operating on Kadalie are such as to shift him to the left. The ICU was uncovering a mass receptivity to organised opposition, and there was the beginning of a mass turn to the organisation.⁹⁹ Kadalie's support for the Pact before the election had appeared to involve the belief that his organisation would be freer to operate if there was a change of government.¹⁰⁰ But, shortly after the election, in the course of a national tour, he was banned from Natal.¹⁰¹ The victimisation of Kadalie serves as a focus for the changed attitude of the CP, and promotes the tendency to differentiate between "conservative" and "radical" black leaders. Reacting to the ban imposed by the Natal provincial authorities, the International writes:

"The ICU sent its general secretary on an organising tour to the various industrial centres of the Union. All went well until Natal was reached, where the authorities have prohibited the meeting on the grounds that trade unionism will induce the uneducated native to claim higher wages. What abnormal brains the Natal authorities have, to be sure, to have found that out.

"But perhaps they have been so used to the J.H. Thomas type of labour leader, whose one object is to hand the workers, bound hand and foot to the bosses, that it was a surprise when the native organiser spoke in a quite different strain."¹⁰²

During the May Day celebrations in 1926, the same leader who had assured the bourgeoisie that no African leader would wish to upset any constitution was now "urging workers to hail the victorious republic of the Russian workers, and to unite for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers commonwealth".¹⁰³ The influence of the Party was greatly increased when la Guma, who became general secretary of the ICU, joined the CP in 1925.¹⁰⁴

The 1925 constitution of the ICU¹⁰⁵ indicates the movement to the left of the ICU leadership, arising from the combination of upward pressure created by the groundswell of opposition, and the influence of the Communists. The preamble states:

"No peace can be between the two classes, as struggle must always obtain about the division of the products of human labour, until the workers through their industrial organisations take from the capitalist class the means of production, to be owned and controlled by the workers for the benefit of all instead of for the profit of a few."

The pages of the SAW begin to reflect the more and more fraternal relationship which is being developed with Kadalie,¹⁰⁶ along with

the clear distinction between the ICU as a radical and the ANC as a conservative organisation. A report on the 1926 ANC Bloemfontein Convention concludes:

"Taken all round, it would seem fairly clear that not only was the Convention dominated by the very moderate type of native leader, but also by those native elements who have come more or less under the influence of the South African Party. The ANC will merely remain a name, and not a very prominent one at that, so long as it neglects to concern itself with the main fight of the oppressed South African natives, namely, the fight against exploitation."¹⁰⁷

The ICU, however, was not only regarded as having concerned itself with the main fight, but as having come to do so from a thoroughly progressive perspective. The SAW concludes its reaction to the Hertzog Bills with the call to workers and peasants:

"Join the ICU

"Join the CP

"The organisations that fight on your behalf."¹⁰⁸

In this period, the International/SAW carried several articles reflecting the official Comintern description and assessment of the developments in the Chinese revolution.¹⁰⁹ The central tenet on which Comintern policy rested - the belief that the struggle could be won with the CP subordinated to the Kuomintang,¹¹⁰ and the working class subordinated in a class alliance which it did not lead - was embodied in the assessment of events which it gave

out, and was to have a strong influence on the CPSA.¹¹¹ Increasingly, the Kuomintang, which was affiliated to the Comintern and persistently portrayed as a revolutionary body, came to be regarded as the type of organisation, with the type of policies, which were necessary in South Africa; and, as the Comintern continued to demand the entry of the Chinese CP into the Kuomintang under any conditions, the relationship of the Chinese Party to the Kuomintang came to be seen as the model upon which the South African CP should base itself in its relations with the ICU.¹¹²

The increasingly close relationship between the CPSA and the ICU should be understood in terms of the Party's own conception of the model which it was following. At the same time that the Party was describing itself and the ICU jointly as the fighting organisations of the masses, it was assessing the relationship between the Chinese CP and the Kuomintang as follows:

"The [Kuomintang's] total programme is a model that might well be studied by, for instance, our African Native Congress. It is founded on a world wide prospectus of imperialism whose defeat is contemplated as feasible only, (to quote Dr Sun Yat Sen) 'by awakening the whole people and joining forces with other nations in the world which are prepared to treat us as equals in the common fight against the imperialist forces, such as free Russia as well as the colonial and semi-colonial countries still under the yoke' Within the Kuomintang Party, itself an organisation with branches in nearly every part of the country,

the CP of China works as a leaven, a stimulus and an educating force, the two working together. The Cantonese are spared the misfortune of that 'conflict of loyalties' suffered by the petty bourgeoisie of England, or the Labourites of Natal. On the contrary, the People's government and army (like those of Soviet Russia) fight for the aims of the masses of the people themselves...."¹¹³

In October 1926, SAW reported the growth of the Chinese trade unions, the Kuomintang and the Chinese CP, and commented that at meetings, "[t]he speakers of the Kuomintang stress that the Kuomintang has no intention of introducing Communism, but that it is nevertheless working with the CP because the immediate aims of the two Parties are the same."¹¹⁴

In its assessment of political developments in China, the SA Party identified the problems of reliance upon, and alliance with, forces from outside the working class. There were clear warnings against reliance upon bourgeois nationalists. In August 1926, a Conference of Chinese people in SA was held, in Johannesburg, under the auspices of the Kuomintang.¹¹⁵ Andrews spoke at the conference. He "'unofficially' welcomed the great struggle of the Chinese people against world imperialism. He warned his hearers that real freedom from oppression could only come through complete economic freedom, and touched on the necessity of also waging a fight against Chinese capitalists."¹¹⁶

But the Party had little experience in dealing with and assessing the trajectory of radicals from outside the working class. In this situation, there was a tendency to accept the categorisations of the Comintern, without taking full account of the reservations which Party propaganda indicated. The Party therefore identified the dangers of bourgeois influence within the nationalist movement but, in line with Comintern policy, did not initially identify the link between bourgeois interests and the leadership of the Kuomintang. Similarly, theoretical warnings about the nationalist bourgeoisie coexist with support for the policy of Communist affiliation to the Kuomintang under whatever conditions are laid down by the bourgeois nationalist leadership of the Kuomintang.¹¹⁷ The product of this combination was a tendency to see individuals from outside the working class who were radical as revolutionaries, without a developed understanding of the processes and pressures by which that radicalism was promoted, sustained, weakened or destroyed.

As was the case in China, this view of developments inside SA was to be challenged by the course of events. At the end of 1926, the apparently fraternal relationship between the CP and the ICU leadership collapsed, and leading Communists were expelled from the ICU. During the course of 1926 la Guma, the Communist General Secretary of the ICU, had toured thirteen branches.¹¹⁸ In his report of that tour, he made several criticisms of the way in which ICU officials ignored the organisation's constitution. He singled out the way in which Kadalie bypassed the ICU National Council. He also proposed the transformation of the ICU from a

general union into industrial unions.¹¹⁹ These criticisms by la Guma have been put forward by some analysts to explain Kadalie's decision to expel the Communists.¹²⁰ There can be little doubt that they promoted that decision. Johns points to a second major factor: "[T]he question of ICU representation overseas provoked disagreement between the Communist Party and the ICU."¹²¹ These disagreements promoted the developing hostility of Kadalie towards the CP. A consideration of the policy of the Party on key international issues illuminates both the disagreements with Kadalie - and the way in which the Party was prepared to face the developing conflict.

In the 1925 Programme of the ICU, drafted under the developing influence of the CP, the ICU had coupled its declared goal of the ownership and control of the means of production by the working class with a strongly declared commitment to local and international working class unity:

"This is the goal for which the ICU strives along with all other organisations of workers throughout the world. Further, this organisation does not encourage antagonism towards other bodies, political or otherwise, of the African peoples or of organised European labour."¹²²

It seems likely that the specific reference to white workers reflects the impact of the influence of the CP. The CP obviously believed that Kadalie was operating in pursuit of that goal when they supported his decision to apply for affiliation to the

British Trade Union Congress (TUC). The changing assessments made by the Soviet leadership of the British TUC in this period served to disorientate the CPSA, and undermine the authority with which it could speak on international developments. Before the defeat of the 1926 general strike in Britain, the General Council of the British TUC was portrayed by the Soviet leadership, and by the Communist movement internationally, as militant.¹²³ Kadalie must surely have believed that he could count on the support of the CP when, at the suggestion of the British TUC, he applied for affiliation to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).¹²⁴ At a time when social democrats and liberals were building links with Kadalie,¹²⁵ the position which the CP took on international links seemed confusing. The Party opposed the decision to apply to the ICFTU, categorising it, in accordance with Comintern policy, as an agent of labour reformism:

"The announcement that the ICU had applied for affiliation to the Amsterdam International came as a big surprise to those acquainted with the true character of the latter body in comparison with South Africa's militant organisation of native workers.... [O]ne may indeed wonder what has prompted the ICU leaders to apply for affiliation, and it is certainly to be regretted that so far very little light has been shed on the matter."¹²⁶

There seemed to be an immediate inconsistency between politically lauding the British TUC, but criticising the policy of the organisation to which the TUC was politically committed. But it

was not taken up within the Party. By the time the decision to apply to the ICFTU was known, the political assessment of the British TUC had changed. The basis of the favourable assessment which Communists internationally had of the British TUC was the fact that it was regarded and portrayed as an ally by the Soviet Union with which it was a partner in the Anglo Russian Committee.¹²⁷

As the policies of the British TUC General Council increasingly visibly belied the assessment which had been made of that body by the Soviet leadership, the Comintern changed its assessment. The TUC leaders, who had only days previously been described as leaders of the workers in struggle, were now attacked as enemies of the working class.¹²⁸ The CPSA put it in this way:

"Events have shown that this [workers' militancy] was sabotaged from the outset by the weak, cowardly, vacillating leadership exercised by the reactionaries holding the reins in the General Council."¹²⁹

In his move to the left, Kadalie had come to rely more and more on the power of militant rhetoric, and the threat of the strike weapon. The CP, as we have seen, operating on the assessment of the dynamic of the inexorable laws of capitalist development, saw that militant rhetoric as the proof of an embryonic revolutionary position. This assessment was fuelled by similar assessments being made by the Comintern of the Kuomintang and of the British TUC General Council, and then of the lefts on that Council. As first the 1926 British general strike, and then the British miners' strike, collapsed in defeat,¹³⁰ the political assessments

made by the CPSA were shown to be incorrect. It is to be expected that the false assessments and changing policy promoted confusion amongst CP members. For others, like Kadalie, who were neither committed to the Party nor to left-wing politics generally, the process must have promoted a lack of confidence in what the Communists were saying.

In this period, Kadalie was coming under the eye of different elements within the international labour movement, as his power and influence as a leader became more apparent. The Communist movement internationally was caught up in its own misassessments of the British TUC and accordingly being forced to turn against what had previously been portrayed as its ally. These were conditions in which Kadalie's suspicion of and opposition to the la Guma report could be exploited by his anti-Communist international contacts. On the basis of these different factors, the hostility of Kadalie towards the Party was being developed. But the Party was not prepared for the change.

As Kadalie came under the influence of the CP, as CP members became more influential inside the ICU, the left turn by Kadalie, the growing mass base of the ICU, and the increasingly militant content of ICU policy, came to convince the CP that the ICU was a mass organisation fitting the model of the Kuomintang in important respects. The combination of these factors was to have three major consequences. Firstly, there was a tendency for the CP to operate in relation to Kadalie as if his radicalism was

stable. For a period, the Party press carried no political criticisms of his policies or his leadership.¹³¹ Secondly, the CP appeared to presume understanding and support from the leadership of the ICU - which they tended to see as organically moving to the left. Thirdly, the CP was not adequately prepared for maintaining its position inside the ICU **except** through the presumed support and understanding of its ally. In China, the policy of the Comintern and its failure to understand the nature of movements to the left by elements outside the working class were to render the Chinese Party politically unarmed to foresee and resist attacks against it by the Kuomintang.¹³² In South Africa, similar limitations of perspective meant that the Party was not politically prepared for attacks against it from the ICU leadership.

In August 1926, SAW carried an article by L W Greene, attacking "speculation" within the ICU.¹³³ This led to a sharp clash with the Natal leader, Champion, who attacked Greene for making his complaints through the CP newspaper:

"Mr Greene might have assumed in his opinion that your paper is the official organ of the ICU or in any way connected with the ICU. I shall be much obliged if you will kindly tell Mr Greene that the ICU has its own paper and does not want its reports especially of that nature to be published in strange papers."¹³⁴

There were initial public signs of a division between the Communists and Kadalie in November 1926. An editorial in the SAW criticises the ICU for acquiescing "in its National Secretary's, Clements Kadalie's, reference to Communism as a second 'master'

whom a member of the ICU 'cannot serve'".¹³⁵

In December 1926, the Council of the ICU, meeting at Port Elizabeth, resolved by six votes to five that: "No officer of the ICU shall be a member of the Communist Party."¹³⁶ Despite support for Communist members from ICU branches, including those at Port Elizabeth,¹³⁷ Vereeniging,¹³⁸ and Johannesburg,¹³⁹ the ICU leadership was able to have a motion passed at the Annual Conference in April 1927 which ratified the Council decision and prohibited ICU members from associating themselves in any way with the CP.¹⁴⁰

The fact of the connection which Kadalie had with the Second International is not, at the same time, an explanation of why Kadalie moved from his radicalism to some of the positions of the Second International; or of why the leader of the ICU was free to act as he did. As we have seen, the basis of the move to the left by Kadalie lay in the mass radicalisation of the period, rather than in his own political commitments or the depth of influence of the CP. While the general groundswell of opposition amongst the masses underlay Kadalie's movement to the left, it was not, in itself, sufficient to consolidate that movement and maintain its trajectory. The radicalism of the ICU reflected and promoted the radicalisation of the masses. As mass opposition was drawn into the ICU and articulated by the organisation, expectations were aroused¹⁴¹ and a mood of confidence promoted.¹⁴² But, as part of the same process, the supporters of the ICU came to believe that it was the organisation which would provide liberation.¹⁴³ The rhetoric of ICU leaders included such promises, and aroused such expectations.¹⁴⁴ The result was that the growing confidence of ICU supporters came to rest, not in their own action and strength, but in the leadership and in the organisation in themselves. The tendency of the organisation to rely on the courts - a tendency which was criticised by the CP after the expulsions - served to promote the same consequence.¹⁴⁵

The mass base of the ICU was made up of often poorly organised supporters, ranging from industrial workers in the urban areas to peasants and chiefs in the countryside. There was a limited amount of working class organisation within the ICU which could maintain

a consistent upwards pressure; the structures of the organisation provided very limited lines of communication between the rank and file and the leadership; the link between the leaders and the supporters of the organisation was, in many cases, provided through rhetoric directed by the leaders to the supporters; the processes of decision making were generally undemocratic, with decisions being taken by leaders who were not subject to workers' control;¹⁴⁶ and the build-up of opposition was not being expressed in class action so powerful that it exerted a consistent pressure.

In explaining the conservative turn by the ICU leadership - and the failure of the organisation to build a secure base in the urban working class - analysts have pointed to the petty bourgeois class origins of the organisation's leadership.¹⁴⁷ Kadalie himself pointed to the class differences within the organisation - at the most basic level, between the mass of supporters and the petty bourgeois leadership and officials:

"[Y]oung men, particularly teachers, flocked to the ICU, where they occupied remunerative positions in various banch offices at better wages than they received as teachers. In many cases ... these young men were not all well-equipped or trained for elementary trade union work."¹⁴⁸

In response to analysis which seeks to explain the developments in the ICU in terms of the class origins of its leadership, Bradford has argued:

"From all shades of left-wing opinion emerges a litany for the

masses: trust not the petty bourgeoisie for the stench of their privileged backgrounds rises from the graves of their class suicides.... By stamping a rigid, bourgeois identity on union officials, the term obscures the extent to which they were drawn from a racially oppressed grouping, which was highly fractured and extremely susceptible to proletarianisation."¹⁴⁹

Bradford is right in insisting that the oppression of the black petty bourgeoisie should not be overlooked. That oppression is one of the factors which opens up the possibilities of an alliance between black workers and the black petty bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the immediate economic situation of elements within the black petty bourgeoisie - their standard of living, their conditions of life - may be indistinguishable in important aspects from that of black workers. This is an additional factor opening up the possibilities of a class alliance. The period under discussion is one in which elements within both the working class and the black petty bourgeoisie were radicalised. But class differences do not disappear because there is an alliance, or the possibility of an alliance, between different classes. Nor are they removed when there is a radicalisation which spans elements from different classes. Radicalism can and does have different forms, different contents, and is created in different ways. Peasants who physically resist encroachment on their land are radical. If radicalism is measured along a static continuum, they may appear to be more radical than workers who strike for higher wages - and certainly appear to be more radical than workers who are building elementary class organisations.¹⁵⁰ The radicalism of a petty bourgeois, who is resisting proletarianisation is different

to the radicalism of a worker who is resisting the conditions of proletarian life. There are differences in the radicalism of those who are opposing an increase in their rents, paid in labour-time,¹⁵¹ and those who are resisting an increase in their rents, paid in money. The radicalism with which a peasant resists encroachment on his or her land is not identical with that of the chief, resisting the same process. In some circumstances, these different radicalisms may be contained within a single organisation, or movement of struggle, and articulated through common demands. To a certain extent, that is what happened in the case of the ICU. But, in the course of the class struggle, the different radicalisms do not all generate the same demands, or automatically fall into the same rhythm, leading in the same direction, at the same pace. Without a conscious drawing together of different radicalisms, the most that is possible is for these to coincide at particular points. Even in a situation where different class interests coincide, one set of interests will come to dominate.

In the political dynamics of the situation, the ICU was faced with a series of unresolved strategic and tactical questions: where would the strength be built to win demands against employers and the government? Behind what precise demands would that strength be mobilised? What forms of action would be employed? What forms of organisation would be built? These questions were partly obscured in the period in which mass radicalism, and the radicalism within the petty bourgeoisie, promoted the radicalism of the leaders of

the ICU - and was reflected in the rapid growth of the organisation. But they emerged very quickly when the organisation could no longer simply rest on spontaneous and semi-spontaneous militancy to drive it forward;¹⁵² when it was faced with the growing threat of state attacks;¹⁵³ and when its supporters came to expect advances and improvements which the ICU leaders had promised.

These questions of strategy and tactics were beginning to come to the fore by the end of 1926. They were partly taken up by the CP, in la Guma's call for industrial unions.¹⁵⁴ And they were reflected also in the issues which the CP raised - the issues of democracy and corruption within the organisation. Like some of the more recent analyses of the ICU, however, the theoretical perspective through which the CP viewed these issues actually served to conflate different class interests behind an immediately shared radicalism. When they initially made their criticisms within the ICU, there was a tendency to do so in the belief that they could be answered from the starting point of a basically common radicalism.¹⁵⁵

When they came to make the charge of corruption they were, therefore, ill-equipped to understand how to take up that charge inside the organisation. Corruption was not a deviation which went against the left-wing politics of the ICU leaders - and which they could be morally persuaded to reject. It was rather one of the natural avenues pursued by mainly petty bourgeois leaders and officials, some of whom had been pushed into left-wing positions

on the groundswell of opposition developing all around them. It reflects the disparate class forces inside the ICU, and the struggle against it could only have been definitively carried through if the real basis of that left-wing movement - the opposition of the urban and rural masses - had itself been politically developed and more independently articulated. The struggle against corruption would, in other words, have demanded forms of mass democracy and control over leaders which cut off avenues for petty bourgeois individualism. There is no doubt that there were petty bourgeois entrepreneurs¹⁵⁶ who, facing the formidable array of political and economic restrictions already ahead of blacks and aspiring entrepreneurs, saw in the ICU a vehicle providing access to funds and a level of political power with which to pursue their own class interests. Inevitably, they brought the threat and the reality of financial speculation and corruption with them.¹⁵⁷

The struggle against corruption inside the ICU was tied up with the struggle to restrict and reject the pursuit of such class interests. Inevitably, therefore, it involved the development of the struggle for the independent class interests of the working class to be asserted against those of petty bourgeois entrepreneurs and individualist leaders. That struggle, in turn, could not simply be taken up on the single issue of corruption, but would have embraced the whole range of strategic and tactical questions facing the organisation. There can be no doubt that the corruption charges antagonised Kadalie and other leaders of the ICU, and acted as an immediate pressure on Kadalie to break

with the Communists and return to his former position. But the fact that they could do so serves only to reveal the tentative nature of his left turn, and highlights the limitations of the way in which the Party had understood that political process. The fact that Kadalie was relatively free to respond in the way he did serves, in turn, to highlight the underlying weaknesses within the ICU to which the CP had only just begun to respond.

The ICU was, in fact, a relatively unstructured mass movement, in which different class interests were for a period camouflaged by a groundswell of opposition which spanned the different classes. In these conditions demagogues were able to articulate that opposition, without consistently being under any organised structure of democratic control. The leadership was relatively free to respond to the course of events in whatever way it saw fit. Viewed through an abstracted mechanistic schema, the trajectory to the left came to be relied upon, even while the conditions which were producing it could not in themselves sustain it. During the course of 1926, the CP, reproducing the political thinking of the Comintern, effectively followed behind the ICU leadership, while at the same time antagonising that leadership through apparent vacillation, abrupt changes of policy, and direct criticisms. At the end of 1926, at a time when the ICU was established as a growing mass organisation, Kadalie moved against the CP.

Kadalie was relatively free to move from left to right in

response to the forces operating upon him and his own assessment of how best to secure his individualist goals. Those goals shifted in turn, according to the forces which he perceived. Militant rhetoric comes to be replaced by a commitment to constitutionalism. His own explanation of why the Communists were expelled indicates the abrupt reversal. The Communists, according to Kadalie, had never lost an opportunity to oppose constitutional methods; they "hoped to convert the organisation into a militant force with a declared revolutionary policy"; "they were communists not industrialists, and as soon as they evolved in the former role, they ceased to be of use as industrialists".¹⁵⁸ And, in later years, the militant rhetoric returns, briefly, again. The same approach, by other leaders of the ICU was, within a short period, to be reflected in individualist power struggles and splits,¹⁵⁹ as the political developments within the ICU leadership took it further and further away from the real course of developments amongst the masses.

Simons describes a part of the CP reaction to the expulsions:

The Communists "reproached themselves for having failed to anticipate and resist the expulsion from within the ICU. To avoid offending it, they had refrained from organising trade unions on their own account, or from conducting study classes while trying to persuade it to undertake the work."¹⁶⁰

The expulsions forced the Party to move away from such a position.

Referring to the expulsion decisions the SAW wrote:

"The splitting of the native workers forces in the face of enemy

attack is one of the greatest pieces of treachery that could possibly have been carried out. By their activities in this respect, the ICU leaders have definitely branded themselves as enemies of the working class movement. Not only have they smashed all hope of an effective resistance being put up against the rising tide of reaction, but they will have given a setback to native trade unionism from which it will have much difficulty in recovering. Truly they will have much to answer for in the future.

"The new situation that has arisen demands that every class conscious worker gets immediately busy in exposing the reactionary role of the capitalist good boys. The talk of representation at Geneva and reliance upon law courts appeals must be shown up for what they really are, viz: an attempt to side-track the demands of the masses. In spite of the confusion that has been sown [sic] broadcast, the ICU rank and file are still pressing for action to be taken against the oppressive pass laws and Hertzog's proposed native legislation. It is the duty of all militants in the ICU to raise the rank and file to the realisation that their leaders are deliberately shirking this fight."¹⁶¹

The relatively widespread opposition within the ICU to the expulsions promoted the confidence of the Party. It also revealed the extent to which the leadership could act without democratic controls. **SAW** reported:

"In spite of the fact that every obstacle was put in his way by local and national reactionaries our comrade [Khaile, at Bloemfontein] succeeded in addressing a large meeting of native

workers near Balko Location. They followed the remarks with great interest but were prevented from passing a resolution owing to the manoeuvres of the local secretary who succeeded in adjourning the meeting¹⁶²

In Vereeniging, where a local branch of the ICU had passed a resolution opposing the expulsions, the action of the leadership was more drastic:

"Simply because the Vereeniging branch of the ICU protested against the recent expulsion measures of the National Council at Port Elizabeth, the ICU chiefs now refuse to consider it as being a part of the ICU machinery, i.e. they have illegally declared it expelled."¹⁶³

The Party initially campaigned for a special ICU conference, and the unconditional reinstatement of the expelled Communists.¹⁶⁴ That campaign proved unsuccessful. As a result of the expulsions, 12 years after the ISL's first expression of commitment to the organisation of black workers, the CP finally committed itself fully in practice to the industrial organisation of black workers. At the Party conference in January 1927, Makabeni, Khaile and Thibedi were elected to the Central Committee, and the Party took the decision to establish branches in black areas.¹⁶⁵ In the course of that year, on the initiative of the Communists, several industrial unions were formed. In March 1928, this process was carried forward into the formation of the Federation of Non-European Trade Unions (FNETU).¹⁶⁶ The President, Weinbren, the Vice-President Kotane, and the General Secretary La Guma were all

Communists. Thibedi, who had been a central figure in the initial formation of the unions was one of the first - or the first - black member of the ISL. At the end of 1928, FNETU had a membership of 10,000.¹⁶⁷ Parallel to the growth of these new unions was the development of a wave of industrial action. Lewis characterises this as "a period of considerable industrial militancy".¹⁶⁸ These developments indicated that the movement, which had generated the ICU and had been largely based in the rural areas, was set to be taken onto a new level by the growing level of organisation and willingness to take class action amongst urban, industrial black workers.

The movement to the right of the leadership of the ICU added two new factors to those operating within the workers movement - confusion, as the militant leaders of yesterday denounced militancy; and new divisions, which could only compound the confusion. Nonetheless, the groundswell of opposition, reflected in the development of the ICU as a mass organisation and in the move to the left of its leadership, did not disappear when that leadership moved again to the right. The combativity spontaneously developing amongst layers of workers, and in part reflected in the ICU and the new developments amongst urban workers, created a more substantial basis for the strengthening of the workers' movement and with it, the strengthening of the CP.

In the conditions imposed on the CP after the expulsions, the position of "educate and organise" is no longer being left at the level of general propaganda, or being made dependent on the

willingness of other leaders to agree to the orientation; the Party takes the initiative in directly launching concrete measures aimed at building the organisation of black workers on the shopfloor. In the partial vacuum left both by the political turn of the ICU leaders and the relative lack of a rank and file organised structure, the combativity of groups of black workers was to lead them to turn directly to the CP to provide the means whereby to defend themselves and pursue their perceived class needs. This receptivity created a response to the CP which was far more widespread than the Party appeared initially to expect.¹⁶⁹ And with that response came the growing pressure on the Party to develop a programme which could speak directly to the immediate situations of the different groups of workers who were turning to it. There was also a development of the belief that, rather than simply act as a pressure group in relation to other organisations, the Party should build its own independent base amongst black workers.

The development of an increasingly concrete orientation to black workers was not the only position which existed in the Party at this time. Nor, in the initial stages of the development of that orientation, did it lead to a definitive and systematic challenge to the overall abstract theoretical perspective of the Party. For some in the Party, aspects of the white labour tradition still persisted. In 1927, Andrews was the co-signatory (with Stuart) of a report of the SATUC which rejected a request for affiliation from the ICU on the grounds that white workers would feel swamped,

that disaffiliations would probably follow, and that the ICU would therefore remain isolated. In 1926, when the ICU was considering applying for affiliation,¹⁷⁰ Andrews explained the issue in this way: "Dealing with the proposed affiliation of the ICU to the SATUC, the speaker (Andrews) said the time was not yet ripe for such affiliation. Unfortunately most of the white unions still halted between a 'white collar' policy and a truly working class policy. Their colour prejudice was ... in the way of unity."¹⁷¹

There are no indications that his position on the issue was challenged inside the Party. It was in fact taken further by Weinbren who was at that time a Communist member of the TUC executive. "We were all scared that he would swamp us ... so we rejected the application."¹⁷²

Communists had been forced to the conclusion that Kadalie's radicalism could not really be trusted and was not really substantive. But that conclusion, derived from experience, was not carried through into a challenge to the whole perspective through which developments in the ICU had been understood. As developments were to show, the same tendency to respond to the appearance of political processes was to lead some Communists to an orientation away from the working class, to the apparently more radical petty bourgeoisie and peasantry. And, within a short period, the Party came to see in Gumede, the new ANC President, the revolutionary ally which they had seen in Kadalie.

The ANC met in conference in January 1926, shortly after the speech in which Hertzog proposed his segregation Bills. The

conference, at which Kadalie took an active part, decided to launch a massive campaign, in alliance with the ICU, against the Hertzog Bills.¹⁷³ The campaign did not materialise. In the face of the threat of the Bills, and the failure of the existing leadership to take up the campaign, a clear division developed within the ANC, reflecting the division within the petty bourgeoisie about how to approach the Bills.¹⁷⁴ A "more activist group" developed, and succeeded in having Gumede elected as President in June 1927. A letter from Gumede to "all leaders of the African people" makes clear his initial moderation:

"The task before me is great, and I feel I cannot perform it successfully without the co-operation of, and active support of, all leaders of the race.... I know, there are two wings to the Bantu movement for political and economic emancipation from the tyranny of European rule, the conservative and the radical. These wings are absolutely necessary for our progress.... Just as a bird must have both wings for successful flight, so must any movement have the conservative and radical wings...."¹⁷⁵

Shortly after this letter, which concluded with an appeal for unity, Gumede attended the celebrations of the October Revolution in Moscow.¹⁷⁶ He had previously attended the Brussels Founding Conference of the League against Imperialism at the beginning of 1927.¹⁷⁷ (The CP had struggled unsuccessfully, before the expulsions, to get the ICU to send a delegate to that conference.)¹⁷⁸ After these visits, at a time when rising militancy in Natal was being expressed in the growth there of the ICU, Gumede moved close

to the CP, praising its policies. On his return from Brussels he said:

"Before I went ... the capitalist press had made me frightened of Bolsheviks, but now I know of the magnificent sacrifices they are making on behalf of the suffering people of the world. Do not be afraid of Communists, ... for I am convinced they are your true friends and helpers.

"All sections of the people of Africa must unite to give battle to imperialism. ... There are two alternatives ..., either they must unite with imperialism which inflicted the terrible suffering on them or else they would unite with the only country in the world where freedom existed, and that country is workers' Russia."¹⁷⁹

"SAW regarded Gumedé's visit to the Soviet Union as an historical breakthrough. It declared:

"The establishment of contact between Soviet Russia and the African National Congress through the visit of President-General Gumedé and Cape Provincial Secretary La Guma constitutes a manifestation of the revolutionising of the oppressed masses of South Africa."¹⁸⁰

In the case of the shift to Gumedé, the CP was once again following almost exactly the developments of the political line of the Comintern, from which source theorisations were derived for the local shift. In this case, after the attacks against the Communists which destroyed the alliance with Chiang Kai Shek, the Comintern made a switch in alliance from Chiang to Wang Chin Wei -¹⁸¹

a switch which was reported in the SAW and followed inside the CPSA.¹⁸² In exactly the same period, a part of the response of the CP to the ICU expulsions was to shift personnel and political attention to the ANC. Gumede's move to the left, occurring in the face of escalating state threats and the continuing opposition developing amongst the masses, was explained "as a manifestation of the revolutionising of the oppressed masses". As there had been a partial validity in the CP's recognition that Kadalie was "not a J H Thomas type of union leader", so there was a partial validity in the way in which the Party understood Gumede's radicalisation. There was a radicalisation (not revolutionising, as the CP had claimed) of "the oppressed masses", although by 1928, a part of the groundswell of opposition which had generated the ICU had subsided. But the radicalisation in which Gumede was most centrally involved was not that of the masses - but that of a section of the black petty bourgeoisie, responding to the Hertzog Bills. As will be discussed further below, at the time of Gumede's and La Guma's second visit to the Soviet Union, the policy of the Comintern asserted the revolutionary role of the peasantry.¹⁸³ It also reflected the belief that the "revolutionising of the masses" was a sufficient condition for a popular frontist alliance to be maintained on a revolutionary course.¹⁸⁴ The policy of the Comintern was proven to be wrong by the course of events, in each case. But it was a policy which was promoted amongst elements within the CPSA - from Comintern policy on China, and through la Guma's visit to the Soviet Union.

This reliance upon the unfolding of inexorable laws through which oppressed blacks - of whatever class - would be "revolutionised" was to find its theoretical legitimation in the trans-class alliances and reliance upon leadership from outside the working class which was being put forward by the Comintern through the course of 1927, and which was the political approach pursued by the League against Imperialism.¹⁸⁵ It was this political orientation which la Guma was to bring back from Brussels and Moscow to a CP whose own method had already rendered it receptive to the political practice emerging out of that political approach.

During 1927, la Guma carried back from the Soviet Union the basis of the Comintern resolution relating to South Africa which was to be debated at the 1928 Comintern Congress.¹⁸⁶ That resolution was brought back to a Party in which the progressive tendency remained a central but relatively undeveloped force. It was weakened by the theoretical perspective which it generally shared with the rest of the Party, and by the abstracted idealism and empiricist responses which this entailed. Practical experience of work amongst black workers was still relatively limited; the development of the unions which were to form FNETU had only recently begun. An opposing tendency, responding on the basis of essentially the same method to the political failures of the CP, and to visible developments in the broader political situation, had come to identify the way forward as lying in a class-alliance between blacks. There was not necessarily a contradiction between these two tendencies. But, in the actual situation, they were divided by the differing weights which they attached to the different classes

of oppressed blacks, and over the question of whether working class leadership was necessary. The continuing adherence of elements within the CP leadership to a conception of the white workers as constituting the core of the vanguard had strengthened an empiricist reaction amongst sections of the CP against the conception, not merely of white workers, but of the working class per se, as the vanguard. The theorisation of this position had already partly been provided by the position of the Comintern on China and on the anti-colonial struggle in general.

During the course of 1927, the CP had been pressured by events into a situation in which it was more actively operating in terms of its long declared commitment to "educate, organise and agitate" directly in relation to black workers. With that development came a growing pressure on the Party to develop a more concrete political programme, and a more comprehensive analysis of the society around it. The way in which the Party responded in this situation came to be strongly influenced, and then determined, by the policies of the Comintern.

The basis of the Black Republic programme was agreed upon at three meetings between la Guma and representatives of the Comintern:

- The founding conference of the League against Imperialism and for National Independence held in Brussels, 10 - 15 February, 1927;
- La Guma's visit to Moscow after the conference, when he met Bukharin;
- La Guma's visit to Moscow as the CPSA representative to the tenth anniversary celebrations of the October revolution (September 1927 to early 1928).

For the Comintern, the period under discussion was dominated by the developing economic problems inside the Soviet Union, the political challenge from the Left Opposition inside the Soviet Union and internationally, the developments in China, and the "shift of the economic centre of the world to the USA".¹⁸⁷ The response of the Soviet leadership and the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) to each of these factors was to play an important role in the development of the programme for South Africa.

Given the assessment which was now being made of the United States, the policy adopted by the Comintern to the US CP was a particularly important part of Comintern policy overall. Inside the US Party, Lovestone, the leader of the faction which dominated the Party until the 6th Congress, had specifically argued against the need for any particular approach or specific

programmatic demands aimed at blacks in the USA.¹⁸⁸ There were elements inside the Party who, partly as a reaction to the failure of the Lovestone leadership to take up the question, were receptive to approaching it as a national problem, the solution to which lay in a class alliance of blacks, struggling for national independence. At the 6th Congress, this position was most clearly represented by Ford, a strong partisan of the Foster faction.¹⁸⁹

The call for an independent negro republic provided Stalin with a politically acceptable issue and solution around which to build links with the faction inside the Party which he had already targetted as his chief ally. The political perspective in terms of which that call was being made inside the US coincided with the class alliance parties and policies which were being pursued as strategy by the Comintern at that stage. The political basis for this had already been laid in the Comintern policy for the Chinese CP.

As we have seen, in accordance with the policy of the Comintern, the Chinese CP was itself inside a class alliance bloc, on conditions laid down by its bourgeois nationalist leadership after the coup under Chiang Kai Shek on 20 March 1926. In line with the policy of the Comintern, the Chinese CP had maintained support for a class alliance under the bourgeois nationalists, persisting with the policy of remaining within the Kuomintang, under conditions laid down by the bourgeois leadership, even after the attacks against the CP.¹⁹⁰ Towards the end of 1927, the

Chinese CP followed the Comintern in an abrupt change of policy, and launched a series of adventurist offensives in key towns, all of which ended in defeats. The result was that the Chinese CP was greatly weakened in the urban areas, but continued to expand in the rural areas. This promoted an idealisation of the peasantry as a substitute vanguard for the working class¹⁹¹ - a position whose basis had already been laid in the overall popular frontist approach. Both the denial of the specific class interests of the working class in favour of cross-class alliances under the nationalist petty bourgeoisie (or even bourgeoisie) and the idealisation of the peasantry - were to be reflected in versions of the South African programme, the content of which was being finalised at that time.

At the end of 1927, the workers in the industrial centres of the Soviet Union were facing the effects of a kulak grain blockade which threatened to result in widespread famine, and provoke widespread political opposition.¹⁹² After years of Bukharin's "tortoise tempo" during which the very existence of the kulaks had been denied, government officials now began to call for extraordinary measures, to liquidate them as a class. Under instructions from Stalin, there was a sharp and dramatic about turn of policy by the Soviet government. From a period in which there had been adaptations to the kulaks, there was now a policy of forced collectivisation, which proceeded far more rapidly even than the initial targets.¹⁹³

At the time of the 6th Congress, this ultra-left policy had already been embarked upon. Facing acute pressure because of the potential growth of working class opposition and the opposition being articulated by the Left Opposition, it is quite clear that Stalin intended to use the 6th Congress as a stage for the "final onslaught" against the Left Opposition. The intention was to use the Congress to promote the consolidation of Communist Parties internationally which were loyal and disciplined supporters of whatever line the Soviet leadership decided. As the example of the US CP has illustrated, the task of securing such parties had already begun, as early as the Brussels Conference, by the establishment of links with, and the strengthening of, factions which would later, it was hoped, form leaderships loyal to Stalin.

As we have seen, while this attempt was going on the Soviet leadership sharply changed policy, in accordance with its own perception of how best to secure its position. Developments in China, viewed through a popular frontist perspective, promoted an idealisation of the peasantry; but the internal needs of the Soviet bureaucracy led to the policy of liquidation of the kulaks very soon after. Behind these shifts there was the political continuity of the bureaucracy's perception of its own interests. For Communists in other countries, where the pressure of maintaining the position of the Soviet leadership was not so immediate, the shifts caused some confusion. For the meantime, even on the basis of shifting policy, there was a consistent willingness, on the part of the Soviet leadership, to promote

popular fronts in the struggle against imperialism. And there was the consistent willingness to use that position as the basis for consolidating the links around which the Soviet leadership aimed to secure international sections which would accept, as their political priority, the policies dictated by the Soviet leadership's perception of its own interests.

The Brussels Conference and subsequent meetings with la Guma in the Soviet Union provided Stalin, through his representatives, with the opportunity to develop such a faction inside South Africa. The Woltons became the first Comintern representatives inside South Africa. The method which the S A Party had developed meant that la Guma and others were extremely receptive to aspects of the political line which the Comintern was promoting at the time. We have seen how the Party followed the political line of the Comintern in its support for the leadership of the ICU, and then in its shift to support for Gumede. We have seen also how practical experience was forcing the Party to confront aspects of the political situation in a way which its traditional method had not equipped it to do.

That same method, however, was clearly expressed in la Guma's receptivity to the programme developed for S A by the Comintern. Travelling with Gumede both to the Brussels Conference and to the Soviet Union, la Guma saw, at first hand, what the Party had theorised as "a manifestation of the revolutionising of the masses". On the one hand, the growth of the ICU and the

continuing militancy, especially obvious in the rural and semi-rural areas, was clearly visible. On the other, la Guma could see the persistent opposition of the organisations of white workers to any form of class unity with blacks and the retreat from militancy by white workers. Finally, la Guma was faced with a Party leadership, which, while emphasising the need to organise black workers, still had a tendency to conceive of the white workers (the best organised) as the vanguard.¹⁹⁴ And while continuing to emphasise the crucial role of the white worker, the Party was still not operating on the basis of a clear programme or strategy which connected concretely with the distinctive social, political and economic oppression which affected the black petty bourgeoisie as well as black workers. Reacting to this situation in terms of the empiricist method of the Party, la Guma turned away from a conception of the vanguard role and independent interests of the working class, and substituted for that the oppressed black people. The general political positions of the Comintern at the time provided both a "theoretical explanation", and an impetus for that substitution. The political tension which existed within the Party as reflected in la Guma's position could, in turn, be exploited by the Stalinist leadership of the Comintern, which could thereby gain the type of link which it was at that stage seeking to promote with all parties. Far from "combining a firm adherence to Marxist theory with a passionate belief in national liberation",¹⁹⁵ la Guma's political position reflected the workings of the method of the Party, the workings of abstract theory, in terms of which immediate empiricist responses to surface appearances came to be theorised,

ex post facto, by hypostatized concepts. In the process, the political independence of the working class - the struggle to articulate and pursue the specific class interests of workers - was surrendered, to the popular frontist alliance of oppressed black people. As la Guma made clear, the issue was not one of class alliance within which working class interests would be expressed. It was rather one of class alliance in which specifically working class interests did not have to be expressed.

Simons quotes la Guma as arguing: "To be revolutionary, a national movement in conditions of an Imperialist yoke need not necessarily be composed of proletarian elements, or have a revolutionary or republican programme, or a democratic base".¹⁹⁶ The Kuomintang had met these criteria perfectly; the CPSA as a whole had followed the line of the Comintern towards China, and the commitment to develop such a national movement was clearly held by an influential group within the CPSA.

When it came, however, to the full implementation of that line in South Africa, there was resistance from inside the Party. In December 1927, la Guma while in the Soviet Union submitted a report to the ECCI informing them that "the resolution on South Africa submitted by the ECCI has not received the approval of the Central Executive of the Party".¹⁹⁷ At approximately the same time, it was being decided at the annual conference of the CPSA that the Central Executive should discuss the resolution with la Guma

(and Gumedé who was also in the Soviet Union) on their return from the Soviet Union, before submitting any report to the ECCI.¹⁹⁸

Roux has argued that the new programme was imposed on the CPSA from outside.¹⁹⁹ Simons points out that a representative of the S A Party was involved in the initial drafting of the resolution. They also point out that Roux, while in the YCL, had supported the submission of a dispute within that organisation to the Comintern.²⁰⁰ In the actual chronology of events, and the context in which they occurred, there can be little doubt that the programme was drafted by officials of the Comintern, in consultation with La Guma. Bunting opposed the choice of la Guma as the CPSA representative to the October Revolution celebrations.²⁰¹ Apart from the fact that this meant la Guma's second visit within a matter of months, it is likely that Bunting was opposed to sending a representative who did not support the position of the majority of the S A Party leadership. The argument between Roux and Simons raises the general issue of the relationship of a national party to the International of which it is a part. Roux's position expresses a hostility to a democratic centralist link; Simons responds by pointing to the involvement of la Guma in the development of the programme as proof of a "national input". Both analysts overlook a crucial part of the dynamic in the situation. Simons, by assuming the validity of the programme, removes the necessity of investigating the process by which it was agreed within the CPSA, and the impact of that process. Roux, by his hostility to an international democratic centralism, obscures the receptivity to the Comintern programme amongst elements within

the CPSA, the process by which that receptivity developed, and the limitations of the opposition to the new programme.

The Native Republic thesis was presented finally through several different documents - the Comintern's programme for South Africa, adopted at the 6th Congress;²⁰² the preamble to the general programme adopted at the same Congress;²⁰³ the ECCI Resolution on the Negro Question;²⁰⁴ the ECCI Resolution on the South African Question;²⁰⁵ and the programme of the CPSA, adopted in 1929 ("the programme").²⁰⁶ Three distinctive political orientations are reflected in these different documents:

- the popular frontist alliance and idealisation of the peasantry;
- an orthodox commitment to the leadership of the working class;
- the continuing belief amongst elements in the CPSA that the white workers would cast aside their race prejudices because of inexorable economic laws, and play a vanguard role.

There were clear contradictions between these different approaches; this was to be expected because, in the course of the preparation of the programme, the Comintern changed political line sharply; and there were continuing political differences contained within the Party itself.

The idealisation of the peasantry is most strongly reflected in the programme adopted by the CPSA. Clearly revealing the influence of la Guma and the political line of the Comintern at the end of 1927, the programme, referring to the establishment of

socialism argues that "this can only be accomplished under the leadership of the United Workers and Peasants of town and country", and further refers to "the agrarian masses who constitute the great bulk, and potentially owing to land hunger, perhaps the most revolutionary section of the oppressed race".²⁰⁷ The politics behind this formulation differs from that of the ECCI Resolution on the South African Question, which, while focussing heavily on the agrarian question,²⁰⁸ includes a specific reference to the leadership role of the working class: "The black peasantry constitutes the basic moving force of the revolution, in alliance with and under the leadership of the working class."²⁰⁹

In a section of the CPSA programme which appears to be written in the usually unmistakeable style of Bunting, the inexorable laws making for unity of the working class are invoked, within the framework laid down by the 6th Congress:

"As for the white working class and peasantry, they will not forever be content with a position of tinsel 'aristocracy', whose material advantages are continually dwindling, or with the venal role of mere policemen, watchdog and bully for the master class over the black slaves. Today there is almost as much poverty and hopelessness to be found among large strata of whites as among blacks. 'Poor whites' are already a 'depressed class' and many white proletarians tend to become declassed or excluded as 'redundant' from the working class proper.... At the same time, white workers are beginning to realise the need of joint action with blacks if they are ever to win in a first class 'forward movement', which clearly implies that if the black is not to scab

on the white, his demands must be espoused by the white. And after all, the whites are only a small part of the proletariat."²¹⁰

With the different priorities and orientations contained in the various policy documents, and given the differences already existing inside the Party, there were not only different interpretations, but there was also considerable confusion inside the CPSA as to what precisely the Native Republic meant. Was the Native Republic a bourgeois democracy, a workers' state, a workers' and peasants' state, a stage to one or other of them, and if so, which stage, on the road to which form of government and state?

The slogan was introduced at a public meeting in Johannesburg thus: "A South African Native Republic is a stage towards a workers and peasants government with full protection and equal rights for all minorities."²¹¹ SAW explained that: "A Black Republic means real democracy and majority rule in South Africa."²¹² In the Comintern resolution, the Native Republic is described as "a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government."²¹³ These formulations clearly mean a democratic revolution, as a distinct stage, to be followed by a socialist revolution. Even on the basis of an unambiguous stages approach, the programme was still unclear. As Legassick points out "this programme left unclear precisely who was to achieve the democratic revolution and how. White and black workers through a general strike? Or, if the non-white bourgeoisie or intellectuals or peasants were to be

included, what was to be their strategic role?"²¹⁴

In the CPSA programme, there is a clear statement of a stages approach: "This double burden of exploitation carried by the native masses calls for a democratic revolution.... Such a revolution does not by itself mean the final liberation of the broad masses of South Africa. The stage remains to be traversed to the final abolition of exploitation and domination of class by class...."²¹⁵ But the programme also argued that "the conception and realisation of native rule merges into that of the workers and peasants republic, non imperialist, non capitalist, non racialist, and in effect Socialist."²¹⁶

The report of the 7th Conference of the CP, at which the Native Republic programme was adopted, reveals the extent of that confusion:

"The new Party programme was debated for over a full day. The point that raised most discussion was the 'native republic slogan'. The Chairman [Bunting] ruled that any motions involving its rejection or modification were out of order under the CI statutes, but welcomed discussion tending towards its explanation [sic]. In the result, it was understood that it implied [sic], by whatever [sic] stages, a workers and peasants republic, but [sic] with the necessary stress on its overwhelming native character for practically all natives are workers and peasants, and again, probably [sic] only a workers and peasants victory can achieve such a republic."²¹⁷

At the time that the Native Republic conception was first introduced into South Africa, its political meaning was clearly taken to be that which la Guma attributed to it - a bourgeois democracy, with black majority rule. In the struggle for that bourgeois democracy, the peasantry would be the leading force of a national movement which would include blacks of all classes, including the bourgeoisie. It was to this interpretation that the opposition from within the CP was directed. That opposition, of which Bunting was the leading spokesperson, reflected both the development, and the limitations of the development, of a more concrete orientation to black workers from within the Party.²¹⁸

The opposition stood against the clear codification of an orientation away from the working class. Bunting argued:

"[T]he draft programme of the Communist International says there are two main revolutionary forces: the 'proletariat' in the countries at home and the 'masses' in the colonies. I beg to protest against this bald distinction. Our workers are not ONLY mere 'masses', they are as truly proletarian as any in the world.... There is no reference in the draft programme or in Comrade Bukharin's speech to the colonial proletariat as such, to the CLASS power of these colonial workers: as a class they are relegated to inactivity."²¹⁹

This opposition was based, in part, on the developments in terms of which a more concrete and active turn to the organisation of black workers was finally being put into practice. But it was

weakened by its idealised conception of a "pure" working class solidarity and unity, and by its failure to come to grips with the oppression of the black petty bourgeoisie. The extent to which the Party had actually carried through an orientation to the black workers was limited. And, for some elements within the Party who had an orientation to workers, that orientation represented a continuation of aspects of the white labour tradition. The opposition was further weakened by the empiricist nature of such an orientation as reflected, for example, in the adaptation to the political leadership of the 1922 strike. The method of the Party had led to these results. It had also promoted the tendency within the Party to turn to radical elements within the petty bourgeoisie, without understanding the dynamics of that radicalisation. It was now leading elements within the Party to turn away from the obvious and persistent racism of the organisations of the white workers, and to the overt militancy of blacks, especially amongst the rural masses and oppressed petty bourgeoisie. There thus existed a strong receptivity, amongst a part of the Party, to the initial interpretation of the Black Republic Programme, promoted by Iá Guma. It provided a formalised, theorised codification of an orientation which had already begun to be developed.

To be successful, the opposition in the Party could not simply take up the immediate content of the programme. They had to take up the method, which was at the basis of the receptivity of the rest of the Party to that programme. The opposition could not seriously undertake that task, however, for they operated with

basically the same method. Despite this, there were major pressures operating on the opposition to promote their position: the impact of the expulsions from the ICU; the extent to which the combativity of the working class persisted and was being led onto a new level by the growing organisation and action of urban workers; the receptivity which workers showed when the politics of the CP was brought to them directly, and an attempt made to build an organised rank and file around those politics. Despite the weak and confused way in which the opposition argued their position, it reflected these pressures. The "Buntingites" were not left with time, however, for us to know how their response to these pressures would have developed. Just as the long-held propaganda position of organising black workers was to be directly implemented, the developments in the Comintern, which had already guided the politics of the Party, took over. Because of their loyalty, but primarily because of the fact that they had not yet developed a clear and consistent programme for work amongst black workers, or the method with which to pursue it, the Bunting opposition yielded to the position of the Comintern. In the discussion around the Comintern resolution, Bunting relied on experience, the inexorable processes of history, and the eventual invoking of Lenin. But none of these things had yet produced a consistent, coherent programme and practice amongst black workers; nor had it destroyed the empiricism and subjection to abstract theory. Given that, even less could the opposition carry through a challenge to the Comintern. The Comintern could exploit the historic subjection to abstract theory of the CPSA to have

its position accepted.

The political method of the CP had led from syndicalism, to tailing the political leadership of the 1922 strike, to support for the popular front between the NP and the LP, to support for Kadalie, to support for Gumede. In that process, the progressive tendency within the Party emerged and developed; it was, however, weakened by the general response of the Party to the 1922 strike and the ensuing support for the Pact; it re-emerged, more powerfully, and was set, on the very tentative foundations which had been built, to continue its developments under the pressure of the developing workers' movement, in which Communists were increasingly centrally located. It was at this point that the policy of the Comintern came to be adopted by the CPSA, in a way which cut across the developments which were being made.

A textual analysis of different documents in which the Native Republic Programme was put forward reveals significant differences of emphasis and orientation of the type that we have seen. What was to become more important was the changing meaning and differing interpretations of what was, in large part, the same text. While la Guma's conception of the Black Republic had been expressed in the programme adopted by the Party, he was very soon to have the ground swept from beneath him. Not longer after la Guma returned to South Africa as the proponent of the full popular frontist politics of the Comintern, a political about-turn in the Soviet leadership was giving rise to the politics of "the third period".²²⁰

CHAPTER THREE

1929 - 1935

The upsurge of struggle between 1918 and 1920 had been led by the urban black workers and miners. The ICU had emerged out of that upsurge. After a peak had been reached, in the miners' strike of 1920, it was primarily in the rural areas that the movement most actively developed. In 1927 and 1928 the movement of opposition which had generated the massive growth of the ICU began to be lifted onto a new level, even as the ICU began to decline. This was reflected in the growth of industrial unions, and the limited wave of strike action which we have already noted. In the period under consideration, the depth of combativity amongst urban workers came to be reflected also in the development of relatively widespread community struggles.

By the late 1920's, there had been a significant expansion of the manufacturing sector. Lewis quotes the Labour Department's journal as stating:

"South Africa is in the midst of a far-reaching economic revolution, the keynote of which is the efflorescence of a great variety of secondary industries and the progressive industrialisation of large sections of the population."¹

In 1929, the world was plunged into an international economic

crisis, part of the impact of which was to interrupt this process of manufacturing expansion in South Africa. According to Houghton, many "industrial concerns were hit by the great depression, and although the number of establishments increased slightly between 1930 and 1933, the total employment, value of gross output and net output all declined."² Houghton argues that by 1933, the SA economy was emerging from that crisis and entering into a period of sustained industrial expansion. "[M]anufacturing industry made great forward strides between 1933 and 1939.... During the six-year period, the value of both gross and net output more than doubled and the total labour force increased by 77%.... Part of this increase represented a cyclical recovery from the depth of the depression. But notwithstanding, there was a general advance of manufacturing industry during the period."³

Two recent studies both make the point that the impact of the world capitalist crisis on SA was "dramatic and harsh though uneven" in its impact "on the producing classes"⁴. The need to make such a point is in part created by the work of the fractionalists,⁵ which has dominated analysis of the period. Because of the fractionalists' theoretical perspective, the impact of the depression was understood primarily in terms of the "differential impact of the Depression on different capitals".⁶

The period of the international capitalist crisis was a period of intensified class struggle inside South Africa. In conditions of

economic crisis, the state was driven to make attacks against the working class - and forced to seek to create the political conditions in which those attacks could be carried through. In the period under consideration, this meant that the state was driven to attack the developing movement of opposition, spearheaded by black urban workers. An investigation of the dynamics of class relations in this period demands consideration of three factors which have been almost completely ignored by the fractionalists: the resistance by black workers to the attacks against them; the growing opposition amongst a layer of white workers and poor petty bourgeoisie against the conditions of life imposed on them by the capitalist crisis; and the policies pursued by the organisations of the working class.

In the 1929 elections, the Nationalists won an absolute majority for the first time. A divided LP had its Parliamentary representation cut from 18 to 4, with those 4 being divided into two factions.⁷ The division in the LP, between the Councillites, led by Madeley, and the Creswellites, emerged at the 1928 Party conference, and was deepened in the run-up to the 1929 election.⁸ An immediate factor precipitating the split within the Party was the decision by Hertzog to remove Madeley from the Cabinet. The immediate reason for this was government anger at Madeley's decision to meet a joint ICU/TUC delegation.⁹ The effect of it was to deepen a division within the LP which was to the Nationalists' advantage. But there was no substantive difference of principle between the segregationist positions of either of the wings of the LP. Two processes combined to create the basis for a

political crisis within the LP:- changes in the composition of the white working class, and a growth of political dissatisfaction with the role of the LP in government. The way in which the LP leadership responded to these processes created the split within the party.

Lewis, following an argument put forward by Davies, has explained the division in terms of "sectional interests among white workers".¹⁰ The argument points to a part of the basis for the crisis in the LP. Changes in the process of production laid the basis upon which sectional divisions within the working class could arise. Lewis identifies a process of dilution and deskilling;¹¹ O'Meara argues that the "artisan/unskilled division of labour was increasingly replaced by that of semi-skilled operatives working machines".¹² Coupled with this change, a consistent movement to the towns of Afrikaners meant a process of change in the social composition of the white working class.¹³ Lacking industrial skills, and with access to training and apprenticeships often effectively barred, Afrikaans workers were forced into unskilled jobs, often in government service. The partial exception to this was on the mines. In 1926, Afrikaners made up 60% of unskilled white workers, 53% of white miners, and 42% of whites on the Railways, but only 32% of bricklayers, 18% of carpenters, and 10% of fitters in the urban areas.¹⁴ For such workers, the LP was seen as the Party of the sectionalist craft unions, dominated by English-speaking and in many cases British-born leaders, who used racist criteria and links with employers

to keep the "best" jobs closed to Afrikaners. For a growing number of white workers, the LP was in no sense an automatic political home. These ongoing processes of change within the white working class meant that there was a growing challenge for the LP from within the white working class - the traditional core of its electoral support. But it would be wrong to see the division within the Party as reflecting an attempt by any section of the Party leadership to directly and consciously meet that challenge. Nor would it be correct to see in this process of change within the white working class the full basis of the division within the LP. In addition to the Party's failure to respond to the social changes within the white working class, was its political inability to respond to the growing disenchantment of white workers with its role in government.

The opposition to the Pact from within the LP has already been mentioned. Opposition from within the Party to the Pact was to continue. Towards the end of 1926, *Forward* wrote:

"It is no secret that dissatisfaction with the pact government exists amongst the rank and file of the L.P. The chief reason for this is the failure to make industrial matters of the first importance instead of useless and contentious questions such as the Flag Bill, the Sedition Bill etc."¹⁵

Reporting on the municipal elections in which the LP vote dropped, *Forward* argued:

"Labour for the past 12 months has been playing at politics and neglecting the needs of the working class in particular and the whole community in general."¹⁶

The extent to which any solutions offered by Forward would have served the interests of the working class is to be doubted. But it serves to reveal growing disillusionment with the LP from its own supporters and white workers generally. That disillusionment - revealed only two years into the first term of the Pact - was to grow as the economic crisis developed. Notwithstanding the promises of the Pact, the Carnegie Commission found, in a survey conducted in 1929/1930, that 17,5% of all white families with children at school were "very poor". On the basis of these findings, the projected figure for the country as a whole was "more than 300,000 (as a conservative estimate) of the white population [who] were "very poor". As the Commission pointed out, these figures were based on findings "before the effects of the present depression were so noticeable."¹⁷ The centrepiece of LP policy - the "civilised level"¹⁸ provided an extremely low wage level, and the employment measures taken by the government did not remove the problem of growing unemployment.¹⁹ The LP's participation within the Pact had removed any clear separate political identity from the Party. Through that process, it brought into question the continued separate organisational existence of the Party. A combination of growing disenchantment amongst white workers and the social changes within the white working class created a growing political challenge for the LP leadership. The leadership responded to this situation with a repetition of existing political positions, combined with confusion and opportunism. The result was a division within the

Party which served, in turn, to accelerate the turn by white workers away from it.

Before the election, both wings of the LP indicated their willingness to continue with the Pact²⁰ and their electoral propaganda represented a continuation of racist popular frontism. Hertzog entered the 1929 election with an agreement with Creswell, and retained Creswell in the new Cabinet.²¹ This confirmed that ruling class responses to the developing capitalist crisis would be delimited by the framework imposed by the form of popular front through which capitalist rule was then organised. But behind the electoral arithmetic and cabinet composition was an underlying weakness in the cohesiveness of the governing popular front.

Davies, et al have argued that, from the time of the 1928 split in the LP, national capital was in alliance with only a fraction of the white new petty bourgeoisie. "A considerable portion of the rest of the new petty bourgeoisie and white working class were however being dominated by a racist and parliamentary cretinist ideology - still in the form of the supportative class - though to the form of the state rather than to national capital exclusively."²² But this was not "a period of development without contradiction".²³

Innes and Plaut have argued against the theorisation of the period by the fractionalists.²⁴ They point out that "by minimising

the importance of class struggle and by over-emphasising the importance of inter-capitalist disagreements, the Poulantzians have failed to understand the real nature of the conflict".²⁵ The critique made by Innes and Plaut is valid. But it is weakened by their own failure to investigate the political dynamics of the period. In addition, in arguing against the Poulantzian perspective whose effect is to define parts of the class struggle out of existence through the theoretical concept of the new petty bourgeoisie, Innes and Plaut imply that there can be no alliance between sections of the working class and capital - because their class interests are incompatible.²⁶ Innes and Plaut argue that the Pact government did not serve the interests of the white workers, using three points (which are also made by the fractionalists):- firstly, the government protected the interests of capital,²⁷ including mining capital; secondly, "average wage rates for white miners and white industrial workers in 1932 were still lower than they had been in 1922"; and thirdly, there was an increase in "poor whites".²⁸

These points do not mean, however, that there was not an alliance between white workers and capital; nor do they mean that the white workers were actually the new petty bourgeoisie. What they demonstrate is that the alliance into which white workers were led by the LP (with the support of the CP) in the aftermath of the 1922 strike, was an alliance which served the interests of capital. A recognition of that alliance does not imply that conflict between the classes within it was therefore ruled out.

The white workers were not "neutered".²⁹ What it demonstrates is that right at the core of the form of capitalist rule was an inherent instability. In the failure of that alliance to satisfy the expectations of white workers was the basis for a renewal of combativity, and a potential challenge to the alliance between white workers and capital, and to the way in which that alliance was organised. Lewis³⁰ and Davies³¹ both point to the possibilities of an alliance between poor whites and black workers, and to state concern over those possibilities. The fact that the state was now forced into attacks against the movement of opposition spearheaded by black workers compounded the political necessity for a stable, secure social base. For a period, the mounting dissatisfaction of white workers and poor white farmers to the conditions imposed upon them by capitalism in crisis was contained by the Pact. As the course of events unfolded, that dissatisfaction came to be channelled predominantly into the quest for a parliamentary alternative to the Pact.³²

But this was not the only political option possible in the objective conditions. Nor was it the only one which was actually pursued. The process of deskilling and the threat of unemployment placed before many white workers the need to look for avenues along which to defend their positions; these pressures opened up the possibility of a form of "independent" unionism;³³ and there were isolated cases of co-operation and common protest between black and white workers.³⁴ The political movement amongst white workers was partly reflected in the formation of the Trades and Labour Council (TLC) in 1930.³⁵ The formally progressive content of

some of its policies reflects the extent to which co-operation between black and white workers was a serious possibility.³⁶ But the white workers amongst whom anti-capitalist, anti-Pact grievances were likely to be the strongest included some of those who were least likely to be unionised - the unemployed and the unskilled.³⁷ And the immediate political legacy of the organisations to which the white workers looked stood as a major obstacle to the broadening of the incipient challenge to racist popular frontism and to the building of a non-racial working class alliance.

These organisations had supported or participated within the Pact. They had put forward policies which channelled the expectations of white workers towards Parliament. The union leadership had obstructed the possibilities of an alliance between black and white workers.³⁸ And the great majority of the leaders involved had supported the pursuit of demands through and in accordance with the restrictive structures and procedures of the Industrial Conciliation Act. The limited extent to which the LP provided the white workers with a working class political organisation had been further undermined, not merely by the class collaboration of the LP in the Pact - but through the leadership divisions which split the organisation.³⁹ None of these factors stopped the white workers and poor white petty bourgeoisie from responding to the conditions imposed upon them with growing anger.⁴⁰ But they made it likely that the expression of that anger would be contained, and served to channel white workers away from

any alliance with blacks. The exception to this, in the course of the period under consideration, at least formally, was the TLC. But, as Lewis points out, the formal positions of non-racialism of the TLC were not put into practice.⁴¹ Additionally, within the organisation, militants were split between those who supported that formal orientation, and those who believed that an orientation to blacks was an unacceptable obstacle to an orientation to unorganised whites.⁴²

Nonetheless, in the actual dynamics of the situation, the Pact government was forced to carry out attacks against black workers and their organisations, at a time when it was beginning to grow increasingly unpopular amongst whites.

In this period, elements within the ruling class looked towards the black petty bourgeoisie as a medium through which to secure social stability amongst the black masses. It was an option which the ruling class had always tried to keep open. Its importance to the ruling class is reflected in the formation of the South African Institute of Race Relations (IRR) with the support of big capital in 1929⁴³ - precisely to provide an avenue for such collaboration. There is a clear parallel in the way in which the Joint Councils followed the upsurge in the workers' movement of 1918 -1920⁴⁴, and the formation of the IRR came after the upsurge reflected in the growth of the ICU and the formation of FNETU. But the ruling class in crisis cannot keep all options open, or freely choose those whom it seeks to draw into collaboration and

alliance.

The question of alliances was the product of the basic political issue facing the state: how to carry through economic and political attacks against the mass of the working class. And that question was in turn imposed upon the ruling class by two developments the course of which, as a class, they are unable to control. The first is the tendency of their economic system to move from crisis to crisis. The second is the tendency of workers to resist the conditions of life which capitalism imposes upon them. In the period under consideration, the state was tied into a situation in which the alliance with white workers was not simply dispensable. But there were two major factors undermining that alliance - the growing discontent amongst white workers, and the fact that the capacity of the LP to deliver the white workers into an alliance was increasingly questionable. The unavoidable political price of the alliance which it pursued was policies and action which would undermine the possibility of keeping open the option of an alliance with the black petty bourgeoisie; at the same time, the alliance with white workers was relatively unstable - and the movement of black workers was developing.

A series of attacks was launched against the working class. The state imposed increased unemployment, effective wage cuts,⁴⁵ new forms of taxes, tax increases, and extended the pass laws and taxation for women through the Urban Areas Amendment Act (1930).⁴⁶ In some urban areas, a 10pm-4am curfew was introduced.⁴⁷ A myriad of different regulations was introduced by different urban

authorities. The Native Services Contract (1932) was aimed at tightening controls around workers in the rural areas, and on movement to the towns.⁴⁸ It was one thing for the state to introduce measures aimed at protecting capitalist profits and political control. It was another for those measures to be successfully imposed upon the working class. And once imposed, it was yet another thing for the imposition of those measures to be maintained. Particularly at the latter two stages, where a state measure had an immediate impact on workers, there was working class resistance. As will be discussed, the mass reaction to taxation is evidence of a widespread, although largely individualised, necessity and willingness to resist state measures. In some cases, this atomisation was broken down through the collective organisation and struggle of workers who shared grievances and faced a common attack.⁴⁹

The impact of taxation is not only economic, but also political, in the sense that it is a means by which the state forces a recognition of its authority and imposes discipline. That general discipline will be given a particular content according to the needs of the state - and its capacity to make sure that its needs are met, at each particular point. Nzula has explained how taxation was used to tie peasants to money-lenders in trading stores.⁵⁰ Through calling in their debts, those traders could force peasants to accept employment. The major source of income for the trader was neither sales nor interest on loans, but the premium received for each worker provided to the prospective employer.

And as the state turned to the question of tightening control in the expanding urban areas, taxation came to be used as a major weapon here as well. This occurred in three different ways: firstly, a set of urban-based taxes was developed - such as the lodgers' tax; secondly, tax receipts came to be demanded as a form of pass in the urban areas; thirdly, the collection of taxes was, in specific cases, organised through raids in the towns, in which the state sought to demonstrate its authority and its capacity to impose control through its repressive apparatus. But, at each of these points of application, there was resistance. In some instances, such as Potchefstroom, the issue of taxation, and in particular the lodgers' tax, was central to local urban struggles.⁵¹ But beyond the workers who were involved in those struggles, the resistance against taxation extended to hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants who were individually resisting taxation. Despite the introduction of measures designed to increase and extend taxation, the amount of money actually collected in taxes went down each year from 1929/30 to 1932/33, and then fell again in 1935/36, as the combativity of the working class began to rise again.⁵² The tax changes and standardisation of the tax system meant that blacks in Natal faced an especially high increase; but the actual amount paid in taxes in Natal dropped each year from 1930/31 to 1933/34, and even when it began to rise at that stage, the total collected was still far below that of 1925.⁵³

This fall in the amount of taxes paid does not reflect a lack of

determination on the part of the state to collect those taxes. What it does show is the relative failure of the measures which the state adopted, its inability to transform plans on the question into reality, the fact that people just could not afford to pay, and the level of resistance with which the attempts by the state to impose the new measures was met. A brutal direct attack against the workers' movement was a likelihood through the whole period under discussion. It was not surprising that on 14 November 1929, when such an attack came, it should be launched in Durban against the dockers, a group of workers who were relatively powerful, on the immediate issue of tax collection. Pirow, the Minister of Justice, led an attack of 700 police (500 white, 200 black). The whites were armed with machine-guns. They surrounded black compounds in Durban at 3am, and proceeded to search some 5,000-8,000 people, demanding proof of payment of taxes. 350 people were arrested, and onlookers were teargassed.⁵⁴

That attack indicated the determination of the government, newly re-elected, to move against the workers in the urban areas, imposing new forms of discipline on them. It reflected also the way in which the urban areas were more clearly becoming the centres of the political struggle. The state was in fact shifting the point of application of the tax laws, from the rural areas to the towns, as far as migrant workers were concerned. This allowed the state to operate where its repressive forces could most immediately be centralised and where, it was hoped, one major aggressive show of force could have a generalised intimidatory

effect. In June, before the attack, a right-wing mob had attacked the ICU offices.⁵⁵ This combination between official and unofficial arms of the state in attacking workers was to be repeated on different occasions in other parts of the country.⁵⁶ The immediate impact of this combination was the increased severity of the attack. But the very fact of involvement by the unofficial arm of the state was indicative of the problems which the ruling class had in building a stable and sufficiently powerful social base. The unofficial arm of the state is not under the same control or discipline as the official forces of the state. Its emergence into direct action in this way is an indicator of the political volatility amongst layers of those to whom the ruling class looked for a stable social base.

Furthermore, the very fact that the political centre of the struggle had shifted so conclusively to the towns promoted political difficulties for the state in imposing the measures upon which it had decided. If the forces of repression could be concentrated, so too could the forces of resistance. The non-payment of taxes was widespread - but it was occurring in a way which left workers atomised on the issue. At the local level, however, the objective possibilities of the individualised mood of resistance being generalised and drawn together were several times manifested in the building of organisation and action around clearly articulated demands. Struggles revolving around the conditions of control being imposed in the towns developed in many different urban areas across the country. The struggles against the lodgers' tax in Potchefstroom, the pass laws in

Durban,⁵⁷ and rent increases in Langa,⁵⁸ were all examples of generalised action, although action in each area was isolated from the others. The link between grievances which were felt individually came to the fore in action and organisation which, once it emerged, spread widely within the locality.

This possibility that attacks by the state and attempts to impose discipline would generate a broad and united resistance was revealed in the struggles which developed around the issue of rents. In Langa, there was a successful rent strike, in response to attempts to increase rents.⁵⁹ The resistance against both the payment of and increase in rents differed from resistance against taxation to the extent that cash rents were encountered primarily as an urban problem, while traditional forms of resisting taxation had been already developed in the rural areas. This meant that while the immediate material basis for a united working class resistance to taxation had been created only when the state shifted the point of application to the urban areas, the immediate basis for such a resistance on the issue of rents was established from the outset. The way in which rents were gathered promoted the tendency towards collective resistance, bringing to the fore what was common in the sometimes different individual experiences of workers. Rents were due to be paid at the same time, by groups of people concentrated into the same areas, to the same place. The centres of state authority in the black areas were not primarily the police stations, but the Superintendents' offices, from which point was co-ordinated the

application of controls on all aspects of workers' lives, and from which, increasingly, municipal police forces were organised. It was from these offices that the application of all the new urban controls of the period was co-ordinated and organised, and they very quickly came to be seen as the centres of state control which they were, and regarded as the primary targets of community struggle. One of the demands in the Potchefstroom struggle was for the removal of the Superintendent.⁶⁰

As working class struggle develops a momentum, workers are able to turn to a whole network of links within their class which is sometimes extremely developed, and always far more extensive than immediately apparent to the external observer.⁶¹ But there are potentially overwhelming material problems which stand in the way of this set of informal links being developed into more formal organisation which rises above and draws together different working class groups, at the level of the community and the workplace. These include the lack of resources; tribal, racial and other divisions; and repression from the state. There are no conditions under which the state abstains from involvement in developments in the workers' movement, and there are recurrently conditions in which the state is driven to direct repressive attacks against the workers' movement. Such were the conditions in the period under discussion. But the state could not simply muster the forces necessary to impose the new measures of urban control, and carry through the economic attacks which the capitalist crisis dictated. The state does not have the automatic capacity to carry through its plans, even when these are

relatively clear-cut. This is generally true and, in the period under discussion, it was made more true by the challenges to the class alliance through which capital organised its rule.

The working class was faced with the conscious plotting and attacks of a state which could not rely upon any a-historical strength to ensure that it achieved its goals. Within the working class, there was clear evidence of a widespread generally common set of grievances, and an individual mood of resistance. Where conditions themselves promoted a collective form of resistance, this sometimes developed into fairly widespread class action. This is evidence of the objective possibilities for the development of a broadly-based movement of resistance. But these factors were not in themselves sufficient to break down the atomisation of the working class at all levels, and generate and sustain broad, united organisation. The mass and vanguard organisations of the working class historically assume the responsibility for organising that broad resistance, and developing a conscious political response to guide it. But both of those organisations were suffering from self-inflicted wounds which were to deepen as the period continued. The result was that the state was able to compensate for the limitations imposed on its freedom to choose courses of action and pursue political options, by the greater political weakness of the movement of opposition. The reality was that the existing organisations of opposition did not act in a way which could consolidate or develop the basis for resistance which had been created by

workers. The developments within the leaderships of the CP and the ICU which contributed to the political weakness of the working class in turn politically weakened those organisations in the face of developing state attacks.

Divisions within the ICU and the lack of a clear strategy and tactics began to promote its decline as an organised force. For a period this was masked by the continuing levels of mass support which the organisation could rely on. It expanded in Natal⁶² and the Transvaal,⁶³ even as it was declining in the Cape. But mass support was not in itself enough to maintain the development of an organisation which was, at leadership level, increasingly divided and which, at rank and file level, relied upon a degree of combativity which could not be permanently, spontaneously self-sustaining. By 1929, the ICU had been divided into three different organisations - the ICU (Ballinger); the ICU yase Natal (Champion); and the Independent ICU (Kadalie).⁶⁴ There was no clear left-right division within the splits which had occurred. The splits in the ICU, the accusations and counter-accusations being thrown around by the different leaders, and the movement to the right of Kadalie and then Champion, greatly weakened the ICU in the face of threatening and actual state attacks.

By 1929, the combativity in the working class, the depth of resistance to mounting state attacks, and the political developments in the CP in the aftermath of the ICU expulsions had led to a massive increase in Party membership. At the time of the 1929 Party conference, the membership had reached 3,000.⁶⁵ But, by this time, the underlying developments within the Party were set to promote a process of internal conflict. Given the political basis on which that process occurred, it could only serve to sow confusion amongst the broader membership of the Party, and weaken the capacity of the Party to develop that membership. This process of degeneration was not immediately obvious inside the CP, partly because of the rise in its membership. Once the Comintern programme had been accepted by the 1929 Conference, the individuals who supported Bunting's opposition applied themselves to promoting it as diligently as possible.⁶⁶ In so doing, they rested on the (self-) assurance that the programme really represented a new formulation of the socialism they had always been fighting for. By recourse to the type of vague, all-embracing, and sometimes contradictory, formulations and explanations that we have seen, they came to terms with the Native Republic slogan. In so doing, they gave up the political struggle against it, accepting, as the Party had always done, the position of the Comintern, however abstract.

As we have seen above, the process by which the Black Republic position came to be decided upon and adopted was such as to interrupt the line of development which had been forced on the Party after the expulsions from the ICU. The position had been

adopted, not because of the objective demands of the concrete political situation, but because of the current policies of the Soviet and Comintern leaderships. The way in which the policy decisions came to be taken was such as to suppress a full discussion around political principles and analysis.

In July 1929, the 10th Plenum of the ECCI confirmed and extended the ultra-left turn of the "third period", which had already been embarked upon.⁶⁷ In the CPSA, which was brought increasingly firmly under the leadership of the ECCI, this led to a changed interpretation of the Native Republic slogan, and a process of bureaucratisation within the Party. This included the abolition of Party branches and branch meetings "because they were 'social-democratic' in nature and 'anti-Bolshevik'",⁶⁸ unilateral changes of policy, a series of personalised attacks and accusations, and numerous expulsions.

The process was to be carried through in the SA Party from the Congress of December, 1930.⁶⁹ Before that, it had already led to the disbandment of one of the Party's broad initiatives. In the June 1929 general election, Bunting contested the Tembuland (Transkei) seat.⁷⁰ During the course of his campaign, he clearly came face to face with the remnants of the general wave of opposition in the rural areas upon which the ICU had, in part, developed as a mass organisation. The divisions inside the ICU and its political degeneration, and the particular conservatism of the ANC in the Transkei (under leadership of the Bhunga

chiefs), meant that the enfranchised black petty bourgeois militants, and the layers of the oppressed masses over whom they had some political influence, would not automatically turn, or continue to turn, to these organisations. The objective situation created the possibility for an organisation which could embrace workers and peasants as well as militant petty bourgeois elements. This is partly reflected in the way in which such people, in unprecedented numbers, were turning directly to the CP, where it was visible. Responding to the situation, Bunting and Makabeni formed the League of African Rights as a broad front organisation, with a four point programme of democratic demands:

- abolition of the pass laws;
- abolition of restrictive land laws;
- extension of the franchise;
- free education.⁷¹

The League immediately attracted the support of influential figures, some in other organisations. Gumede, Modiakgotla, Tantsi, Kotane, Thibedi, Kotu, together with Bunting and Baker, became its first office-bearers.⁷² The content of the League's demands reflected the rural context in which it was formed. To develop the organisation into the urban areas would have involved further demands, relating specifically to the situation of the urban worker. To sustain and build support on the broad basis to which it aspired, the League would have had to couple its propaganda with specific demands relating to more immediate defensive objectives - such as opposition to the Amendment to the Riotous Assemblies Act.⁷³ The initial enthusiastic response to the

emergence of the League suggests that, very soon, it would have come under rank and file pressure to take up the range of immediate issues facing workers and the oppressed petty bourgeoisie. That pressure would, in turn, have created a pressure on the League to develop a more concrete analysis of the objective situation, and of the immediate way forward against employers and the government.

The League, however, was given no time to develop in response to the objective pressures of the political situation. Instead its next step was forced upon it by the policies of the Comintern. Soon after its formation, at a time when the objective political situation demanded the building of an organised broad front for defence against state attacks, a telegram from the Comintern ordered the immediate dissolution of the League.⁷⁴ That telegram, a letter from the Comintern in May 1930, the return of the Woltons (who had been in the Soviet Union),⁷⁵ and the assumption of leadership by the Bach/Wolton bureaucracy at the 1930 Party conference, combined to produce the sharp political reversal in the politics of the CP,⁷⁶ in accordance with the similar reversal of the Soviet leadership.

On the central issue of the Native Republic slogan, Bach was to sum up the change in this way:

"Independent Native Republic means simultaneously a Workers' and Peasants' Government. There used to be a mistaken idea in the Party that the Native Republic was a **step** towards a Workers' and

Peasants' Government...."⁷⁷

The ECCI Resolution on the South African Question had asserted the need for working class leadership over the oppressed masses. In the interpretation given to that Resolution by la Guma, this was subsumed beneath the need for a popular frontist alliance. In the third period, the question of class alliances of the oppressed was subsumed beneath direct calls to revolutionary mass action led by the CP. The Preamble had introduced a distinction between the exploiters and the exploited amongst "the negro population":

"In proportion as the development of capitalist relations disintegrates the tribal structure, the Party must strengthen its work in the education in class consciousness of the exploited strata of the negro population, and co-operate in their liberation from the influence of the exploiting tribal strata, which become more and more agents of imperialism." The ECCI Resolution pursued the theme:

"[T]he South African bourgeoisie is endeavouring to attract to its side certain elements of the non-European population, for example the 'coloured' population, promising them electoral rights, and also the native leaders, turning them into agents for the exploitation of the negro population. This policy of corruption has already brought about the fact that the leaders of the negro trade union organisation - the Industrial and Commercial Union - having expelled the Communists from the union, are now endeavouring to guide the negro trade union movement into the channel of reformism...." The Resolution also spoke of the need to "weaken the influence of the native chiefs corrupted by

the white bourgeoisie".⁷⁸

Bunting had emphasised the class differences among oppressed blacks as one of the reasons for opposing the type of national movement which la Guma proposed.⁷⁹ As we have seen, the opposition from Bunting was completely rejected, and, in the interpretation of the programme given by la Guma, the class differences amongst oppressed blacks were seen as of little relevance. But in the interpretation of the Native Republic which developed in the third period, the issue of class differences within the "oppressed people" is given a greatly increased importance. The influence of non-working class blacks within the broader movement of struggle comes to be seen as a major obstacle; in the process, the fact that blacks outside the working class are also oppressed and the possibility of any front of opposition outside of the direct leadership of the CP are dismissed. Bunting had argued that the "CP is itself the actual or potential leader of the native national movement".⁸⁰ In the third period, a commitment to struggle for political leadership of the broader movement by the CP is turned into attempts to assume immediate and direct leadership of the mass movement, calls to immediate revolutionary action, and a rejection of any co-operation with any other organisation.

The political limitations of the Bunting tendency, and the process of adoption of the Native Republic programme which arrested the development of that tendency, rendered it incapable

of combatting either the bureaucratic methods, or the sharp political turns which such methods served to secure. Employing the methods of the Stalin bureaucracy, capitalising on the political weakness of the opposition inside the Party and exploiting the authority of the Comintern, Bach and Wolton faced little opposition in setting up a third period bureaucratic leadership within the Party. Just as Stalin had reversed political position without this resulting in any change to the programmes which had been pre-agreed for the 6th Congress, so Bach and Wolton set about changing the meaning of the Native Republic programme, without any formal change to the programme itself. Stalin's reversal had taken place without any theoretical assessment of why that change was necessary, why previous policies had been wrong or what mistakes of method had led to the wrong positions. The change had taken place through denunciations of the proponents of the previous policies and ex post facto theoretical legitimations.

In a similar way Bach and Wolton "accounted" for past mistakes through denunciations directed against the "Buntingites". Within the continuing process of the adoption of the same programme, Bunting was first accused by la Guma of an ultra-leftist socialist utopianism, and then by the new leadership for right-opportunist bourgeois reformism. Bunting, who had probably done more than any single individual within the Party to promote a consistent orientation to blacks and a recognition of the rights of the black majority, was accused of being unwilling to follow a

black leadership. It had been Bunting who, on the basis of his understanding of democratic centralism, had ruled out of order any modification or amendment of the Comintern programme. Yet he was accused of disloyalty to the Party.

In the lead-up to the 1930 Party conference, two resolutions were circulated by Wolton, with the ECCI letter. Umsebenzi described the resolutions in this way:

"The resolutions speak of a serious right wing danger within the ranks of the Party.... These disagreements have revealed themselves in the lack of cohesive decisions of the leadership, in the organisational chaos which exists in the Party, and in the intensely bitter, non-political and personal divisions of the leadership [sic] which reflect themselves in and vitiate the entire Party life. The theoretical platform developed by the right wing reveals a fundamental opposition to the political line of the Party as adopted at the 1928 [actually 1929] Conference of the CPSA. In practice, this opposition expresses itself in disbelief in the revolutionary capacity of the masses, in the adoption of reformist tactics, and in the white chauvinist disbelief in the capacity of the Natives to play their full part in the leadership of the Party."⁸¹

The ECCI letter makes the same sort of accusations:

"The Party leaders are committing serious mistakes of a Right Opportunist character.... The principle feature of the Right Opportunist mistake committed by the Party is the failure to

understand the decisive importance of the hegemony of the Proletariat and the complete independence of the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat, the Communist Party in the nationalist revolutionary movement and the failure to understand the significance of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the social revolution."⁸²

The ECCI letter stated that "the ideological and political influence of the CP is by no means keeping pace with the growing mass content"⁸³. This theme was taken up throughout the period - usually as a criticism of the "right opportunists" and "social fascists" within the Party. Together with it went the claim that each success - usually exaggerated - was a confirmation of the correct line of the Party. The tone of the report on a May Day meeting in Cape Town is typical:

"Only due to the fact that the Party at the right moment correctly estimated the reactionary role of the May Day Committee which was led by the ILP and by then bringing forward the independent leadership of the Party, calling for strikes and demonstrations, and especially due to the great activities of the Party in organising the unemployed, setting up committees of the rank and file and exposing the treachery and opportunism of the ILP, only thus was it possible to have such a big meeting on the First of May."⁸⁴

But the right danger was there as well:

"[T]he changing political situation in the Cape Town districts reveals elements who are fully unable to re-orientate themselves

and to understand the role of the Social Fascism in the class struggle.... The failure to understand the line of the Party with regard to the reactionaries has gone in some cases to the extent of supporting Social Fascist candidates at the Municipal elections in Cape Town."⁸⁵

At a time when the state was moving into a stronger and stronger offensive against a politically weakened opposition movement, the CP, loyal to the dictates of third period politics, equated an economic crisis with a revolutionary situation. A letter from the ECCI in December 1931, printed in *Umsebenzi*, reveals the contradictory mis-analysis on the basis of which CP members were meant to operate. The letter identified as "one of the greatest dangers facing the advance of the national revolutionary movement today ... the extreme organisational weakness of the Native proletarians and the low level of the strike movement."⁸⁶ Such analysis was consistent with third period politics, because all objective problems in the situation could be laid at the door of the "social fascists", and "the right opportunist chauvinist Bunting clique" who had "openly become chauvinist agents of Imperialism, appealing to Pirow and Hertzog against the party."⁸⁷ But third period politics also asserted the existence of a revolutionary situation. Despite the problems identified in its own analysis, the ECCI letter confirms the existence of such a situation:

"All the necessary conditions exist for a successful development of the revolutionary struggle in South Africa under the

leadership of the CP."

The Bach/Wolton leadership outlawed any attempt at co-operation or united front politics with any other group. And they demanded consistent adherence to the contradictory abstractions of the ECCI. The result was that the Party leadership rendered its own militants increasingly isolated and vulnerable, demanding that they lead adventurist offensives, criticising them for reformism when these failed to materialise.⁸⁸ The Party became more and more isolated, not only from real developments amongst the masses, but also from the defensive tasks demanded by the objective situation. The leadership launched a series of expulsions against a Party already under growing state attack. The policies and measures adopted by the bureaucratic leadership served to weaken the Party in the face of those attacks. In several branches the Communists, already hit by state attacks, were further weakened by expulsions. In different areas, the Party surrendered its influence as a centralised national organisation by the expulsion of leading members through whom that influence had been concretised. The influence of these people became the influence of militant individuals - some of whom retained their loyalty to the Party, even after their expulsion.⁸⁹ And on those members who remained, the leadership of the CP tried to impose political assessments which, on the one hand, could only result in confusion and disorientation and, on the other, came to be ignored by some members and supporters.

In Bloemfontein, two leading CP members were Malkinson and Ntela,

who Malkinson had recruited.⁹⁰ In January 1931, they were prohibited from addressing public meetings for six months. In March, Malkinson was expelled.⁹² La Guma, was expelled, reinstated, and expelled again.⁹³ During the course of 1931, Andrews, Tyler, Sachs, Weinbren, Klenerman and Bunting were expelled from the Johannesburg branch.⁹⁴ Thibedi had already been expelled.⁹⁵ In Durban, the urban centre of the most sustained resistance and vicious attacks, Pick, Flax, Harrison, Raynard and Fridman were expelled.⁹⁶ Nkosi was murdered at the Dingaan's Day demonstrations in 1930, and 32 workers were arrested.⁹⁷ A further 130 were arrested when they demonstrated outside the trial in January 1931.⁹⁸ In February 1931, the leading member of the Clairwood branch, Abraham Nduweni, was banished to Standerton for two years, under the Riotous Assemblies Amendment Act.⁹⁹ (The Clairwood branch had been formed in November 1930 when Nduweni led his entire ICU branch into the CP.)¹⁰⁰ Gana Makabeni, who had succeeded Nkosi, was deported to Ngewetu in the Transkei.¹⁰¹ In October 1931, Roux, who had been sent to Durban from Johannesburg by the Party, was banned from Durban for one year (he had previously been acquitted of a charge of "creating hostility").¹⁰² There was a series of police raids before Dingaan's Day in 1932, and J Mbete and E Dhlamini were sentenced to six and three months hard labour in Pinetown for "incitement to violence".¹⁰³ All of these moves against CP members came after Pirow's military occupation of Durban in the tax raids of November 1929. Roux claims that more than 200 of the most active Communists were deported.¹⁰⁴ Many others were arrested. A bulletin issued by the

Department of Justice in April 1931 had claimed that CP membership was in the order of "some thousands of natives".¹⁰⁵ In itself, this figure is clearly an exaggeration, being based on the false assumption that the whole of Kadalie's ICU in the Province had gone over to the CP. But the reality was that the CP had a substantive location inside the black working class, with influence extending relatively widely in the area, reflecting the willingness of large numbers of workers to turn directly to the Party in the period.

These were conditions in which the Party was at the very centre of a nationally significant site of struggle. But the state attacks drove some of the CP local leadership into a semi-underground existence, at which level a "district committee" was set up.¹⁰⁶ The Communists in Natal clearly needed the support of the national organisation, just as the workers in Natal, who were bearing the brunt of the aggressive state attacks, needed the support of the broader workers' movement. In part, the Party responded to this situation by sending down people from Johannesburg to replace those who had either been banished or arrested. But nothing that the Party leadership was doing at this stage was simply related to the objective political needs of the situation. A small but politically important group of white members was expelled. And then Bach was sent down to take over.¹⁰⁷ With this move, the Party itself added to the isolation from the mass of workers which the state attacks had promoted. Bach, perhaps more than anyone else in the Party, seemed to believe that the abstract mis-analysis of the ECCI could be used as a

concrete guide to action. As an already weakened workers' movement was further weakened by consistent state attacks, the reports from Durban suggest an increasingly powerful revolutionary movement¹⁰⁸ - in accordance with the Comintern assurance that capitalism was collapsing and revolution was on the agenda - but having no basis in the concrete situation. The political method of the Party promoted the isolation from the mass of workers which the state had been seeking to impose upon it. In the case of the state, it was physical repression and the threat of physical repression which removed leading Communists from the struggle. In the case of the Party, it was a political method and the substance of policies of the third period which did not connect, or provide the theoretical means of connecting, with the concrete situation.

A similar pattern of state attacks, expulsions, and disorientating politics took place in other areas. But in those areas too, the pattern of state attacks was met with localised resistance. In Pinetown, the CP branch was formed by Mbete after he had been deported there.¹⁰⁹ In Germiston, the Party stood a symbolic propaganda candidate in the 1932 bye-election.¹¹⁰ The campaign around that bye-election made the Party more visible than it had been at any earlier stage. And when, during the campaign, a right-wing mob attacked a platform of CP speakers at a township mass meeting, the credibility of the Party soared.¹¹¹ A similar process, whereby the Party benefitted in the eyes of workers by being a target of state attacks had occurred in

Potchefstroom. When the Communists were publicly attacked under the personal orders of the same Superintendent whose dismissal was being campaigned for, large numbers of residents joined the Party en masse.¹¹²

It was clearly a period, then, of sharp political upheavals, when there were repeated examples of struggle, reflecting the willingness of workers to resist the range of state attacks. In part, this was reflected in the rise of CP membership. But the basis of spontaneous resistance from which these struggles were generated was not in itself sufficient to compensate for their major immediate weakness - the fact that they remained isolated from each other, lacking organised co-ordination. The Party's political method, and the results of that method, meant that the CP was in no political position to approach that task.

The unions which the CP had begun to develop in 1928 were neither organisationally nor politically strong enough to achieve what the Party, the ICU, and the widespread resistance of workers could not. They embraced only a small proportion of black workers. They were under the direct control of the CP - which meant that they suffered at the leadership level from the confusion and disorientation promoted by CP politics, and from the bureaucracy which was weakening Party branches. In the period under discussion, Weinbren,¹³ Thibedi,¹⁴ la Guma,¹⁵ and Makabeni,¹⁶ all central FNETU leaders, were all expelled from the Party.

The reality was that the turn to building these unions had

reflected the politics of the tendency within the Party which was slowly developing a method more closely related to the concrete political situation. But as we have seen, the whole process of the adoption and attempt to implement the Black Republic programme had arrested the development of that method. The building of the unions was important to the new leadership of the Party not simply as a political task, but as a propaganda point which could be invoked to prove the pre-revolutionary nature of the situation.¹¹⁷ Consistent with the general method of that leadership, it was not necessary that the propaganda claim should fit the concrete political situation, but only that it should reflect the politics of the third period. The FNETU unions were not based on strategically powerful groups of workers; nor were the unions firmly established where they were located. For the workers who joined them, this was their first experience of industrial and workplace unionism. It would take time for the tradition of unionism to be established. In addition, these unions had been built, not simply on a spontaneous upsurge, but as the products of the conscious strategy of the CP, at a time when the spontaneous upsurge which had generated the ICU had, in part, run its course. Without that continuing dynamic impetus, lacking established traditions of union organisation, with only very embryonic structures and tiny membership, the unions were very easily liable to become top-heavy; and developments at leadership level could therefore play a particularly decisive role. The abrupt changes by the Communists at that level could therefore only serve to weaken the embryonic unions, at a time

when the working class in general was having to face the growing attacks of the state.

For a period, the objective weakness of the unions had been partly masked by the fact that they represented a breakthrough in terms of an organised layer of black workers. The reality was that even with the clearest and most far-sighted leadership, the unions themselves lacked the strength to resist the state attacks. But they could have been part of the attempt to organise a broader front of resistance, and aggressively turned outwards in the attempt to tap the same support which was leading workers directly to the CP, and the militancy which was being shown in a series of localised struggles. CP politics, however, prohibited this possibility. Right through the period, the general programmatic focus of the Party was on calls for militant political strikes and general political demands, without an accompanying focus on building and consolidating elementary class organisation, and on day to day workplace issues.¹¹⁸

One industrial workplace strike which the CP did try to initiate, amongst the Cape garment workers,¹¹⁹ in accordance with the general line of the period, ignored the real tasks of organisation and the real objective problems facing strikers. As a result, the strike was "badly timed, ill-organised and failed utterly. It was supported by very few workers, all of whose places were quickly filled by the unemployed."¹²⁰ The reality was that the reformist Cape union was a real obstacle to the strike - but

according to the political practice of the third period, the possibility of reformist unions having the capacity to influence workers could be removed by denunciation.

In general, the primary defensive tasks and the need to maintain and build independent class organisation were subsumed under general propaganda about the deepening crisis facing capitalism. The deepening political crisis facing the working class was "explained" by denunciations of all other organisations and leaders, and largely subsumed beneath calls to action and claims about revolutionary usurges. Neither the theorisation of a revolutionary situation into existence, nor the change of name from FNETU to the African Federation of Trade Unions (AFTU)¹²¹ could avoid the process making for the collapse of the unions. A combination of their top-heaviness, leadership policies, and state attacks against unionists and the class in general was reflected in a decline in union membership. By the end of 1932, the membership of AFTU had declined from more than 10,000 to an optimistic estimate of 800.¹²²

During the period under discussion, there was a development of organisation and protest action amongst unemployed workers. This reflected both the general level of struggle and organisation which persisted into the beginning of the 1930's amongst the working class generally, and the particular hardship amongst those involved. It was amongst these workers who, more than any others, had nothing to lose but their chains, that there was a

degree of open co-operation between black and white. Organising the unemployed presented massive objective difficulties, particularly when unemployed blacks were liable to immediate arrest.¹²³ These difficulties were partly offset by the determination of those workers to resist, but it is to be expected that there was nonetheless a very large turnover of membership in the unemployed workers' committees which the Communists set up. In February 1932, there were such committees operating in Johannesburg (two, with 250 members); Durban (22 members) and Cape Town (six, with 1,341 members).¹²⁴

The Communists organised a number of street demonstrations which clearly captured the common anger of unemployed black and white workers. On more than one occasion, black and white unemployed marched together, or separate marches co-incided, or were led into each other by the CP.¹²⁵ Despite the extra repressive measures applying to black workers, and the fact that they were not liable for unemployment relief, there was a degree of common ground in the material positions of the two groups of unemployed workers which provided the objective basis from which to draw them together. This the Party set out consciously to do, both in its tactics of demonstration (but not of organisation)¹²⁶ and through its programme of demands. This represented a watershed, making precisely the same demands for all unemployed workers.¹²⁷ The Party played the leading role in drawing the two groups of workers together. But it was only when white workers were also able to see and experience the strength and militancy of organised, mobilised black workers, supporting demands which reflected the

needs of both, that the subjective basis amongst white workers for a degree of unity was established. It was thus the visible strength of the black workers, directed against a clearly targetted common enemy which finally opened up the immediate possibility of unity.¹²⁸

There appeared to be no attempt to involve the AFTU unions in those demonstrations, nor to build organised links between the unemployed workers' committees and the unions. In the event, the limited examples of co-operation between black and white workers, and the growth of organisation and mobilisation by the unemployed were both under growing threat, as the state carried through its attacks against the mainstream of the workers' movement. When the struggle moved into a lull, as the impact of the state attacks had its effect, it was amongst the unemployed workers that there was continued, and even escalated, the level of struggle that there had been in the preceding years.¹²⁹ But, standing out in relative isolation from the mainstream of the workers' movement, the struggle of this group of workers with no industrial strength was inevitably dissipated.

The adoption of the Black Republic programme is regarded by the Party historians as a major step forward in the organisation's political development.¹³⁰ But those same analysts recognise that the period immediately after the adoption of that programme was one of political confusion and degeneration for the Party.¹³¹ As we have seen, however, the developments inside the Party arose directly

out of the process by which the programme was adopted. They were successfully carried through because of the support of one tendency within the Party, and the limited development of the tendency inside the Party which had been developing a position more directly based on the concrete situation. And, in turn, the developments inside the Party served to arrest and decisively weaken the tentative development of a more materialist theoretical approach, and the politics deriving from that, which had been underway. The adoption of the 1928 programme represented the functioning of the method based directly on remote abstract theory - a method which had been located within the Party from its inception. One political result of that process - a belief that the peasantry was the major force of the revolution, was giving way to its replacement - an adventurist call for immediate working class offensives, even before the first had been properly absorbed by the CPSA. The objective consequence, in each case, was to disarm the Party and its supporters, at a time of mounting state attacks.

By the beginning of 1934, the combination of these processes had led to a situation in which the CP had almost ceased to exist, with the membership being slashed from 3,000 to less than 150.¹³² There is a temptation, in terms of simple logic, to explain the decline of the CP by the general attacks against the workers' movement during that period. Such an explanation reveals one aspect of the situation. But to leave it at that is to ignore a crucial part of the political dynamic of CP politics, and a crucial part of the broader political role of the Party. The fact

is that the general movement of resistance was reflected in substantial gains for the CP. At different times, in Durban, Potchefstroom,¹³³ Bloemfontein,¹³⁴ Langa¹³⁵ and Germiston¹³⁶ there were substantial increases in black working class membership. Those gains were made in the face of the state attacks of the period - very often, in the process of direct resistance against those attacks. In each case where the Party made gains there were specific local factors at work. But they were also black areas which were similar to many others throughout the country, and it is likely that the Party would have made gains in these as well, had it had the initial implantation.

The turn by workers directly to the CP was creating pressures on the organisation. But the impact of those pressures was being distorted, insofar as the overall political development of the Party was concerned. Firstly, many of the politically developed members who were responsible for carrying the Party to workers and petty bourgeois militants were expelled; secondly, gains or losses in membership were used as evidence of the validity of the policies of the third period, or proof of the failings of the "right opportunists". The value of the experience and views of new layers of workers within the Party was partly lost; thirdly, the CP was turned away, by a series of political abstractions, from the genuine basis of resistance which did exist.

During this period, the closer association of individual CP members (notably Nzula¹³⁷ and later Kotane)¹³⁸ with theoreticians in

the Soviet Union promoted a more developed general class analysis of SA society than the CPSA itself had developed. This was reflected in much of the analysis developed by Nzula.¹³⁹ But these theoretical developments were taking place in a political context which was dominated by the politics of the third period. The result was that a more developed materialist analysis did not come to form a theorised guide to Party action. The course of Party action and immediate programme were being determined by the general dictates of the third period. Rather, a more developed class analysis became the background against which political assessments and tactics derived from the politics of the third period were expounded.

Meanwhile, in SA, a cruder combination of theory and third period orthodoxy was being developed - in a process which was to give Wolton the nickname of "the deepening economic crisis".¹⁴⁰ A central issue for the Party was the process by which the more developed general social analysis could be translated into practical political conclusions. Together with that went the issue of how a general social analysis could promote a deeper understanding of actual political dynamics. In each case, the general theoretical analysis was effectively dissociated from the practical political conclusions and understanding of the concrete political process. Because the more developed general understanding was being developed in the context of the third period, its political value for the Party in SA was largely lost.

With the workers' movement being attacked and weakened, the organised petty bourgeoisie inevitably came under pressure to move to the right. Where the basis of resistance promoted the growth of political organisation, the relative isolation of such organisation rendered it easily liable to attacks. Outside of the Cape, where there were different organisations based on the black franchise, the ANC represented the most organised section of the black petty bourgeoisie. The response of this organised grouping to the government attacks of the period was reflected in the campaign to get rid of Gumede as the President of the ANC.¹⁴¹ Despite Gumede's radicalism, the actual structures and membership of the ANC had remained largely unchanged. There was a dislocation between the support, including that of workers, which gave strength to different Congress meetings, and the elite decision-makers. The result was that while Gumede's radicalism reflected the developing mass mood, he had no developed base for that radicalism inside the ANC. In addition, as the politics of the period developed, any external base of support was subject to the attacks which were being launched against the working class in general. He was thus extremely vulnerable to any campaign organised within the ANC to replace him.

At times of deepening class conflict, the question of class alliances is placed firmly before the petty bourgeoisie. In this period an alliance with the working class was an alliance with a class under growing attack, whose only line of defence was mass resistance. For the petty bourgeoisie, the threat of an attack was clearly posed in the Hertzog Bills, and the power which the

state could wield in attacking its targets was clearly demonstrated in the attacks against the workers' movement. From a perspective which seeks the line of least resistance, and which is attracted to visible strength, any moves in the direction of an alliance with the working class would only serve as a provocation to the government.

This was a line of thinking to which the petty bourgeoisie as a class was susceptible. It was also a line of thinking which was directly carried to the black petty bourgeoisie by the white liberals. As the majority leadership within the ANC saw it, the only way they could defend themselves was through co-operation with some section of the state. Getting rid of Gumede was the precondition for using the ANC as an organisation through which to seek to cement co-operation with capital. The most immediate avenue to such co-operation was through the liberals. And it was to that option - an option which had always been pursued from within the organised petty bourgeoisie - that the dominant elements within the ANC once again turned. The formation of the Institute of Race Relations in 1929 provided a new national organisational framework through which that could be done, as did the Non Racial Franchise Association (NRFA). In its edition of 6 July 1929, Umteteli argued of the NRFA:

"None can deny the weight of influence wielded by such a body as this, and the ANC should hasten to place its organisation and conduct under the Association's direction."¹⁴²

The leadership of the organised black petty bourgeoisie had to demonstrate its bona fides as a "responsible" and therefore suitable ally for the section of the state to which it looked. Getting rid of Gumede became the precondition for using the ANC as the organisation through which the black petty bourgeoisie could organise for the alliance at which it aimed. In protest against Gumede's radical policies and participation in the LAR (of which he was President) the National Executive of the ANC resigned in January 1930.¹⁴³ At the annual conference, in April 1930, Gumede made an outspokenly radical speech.¹⁴⁴ He said that "Soviet Russia was the only real friend of all the subject races in the world. [The blacks] must demand equal economic, social and political rights, and to this end they must use the weapons at their disposal, organised labour unions. They should develop the democratic idea wherever possible, and go in for strikes, the burning of passes, and the refusal to pay taxes, as all such would help the struggle for a Black Republic."¹⁴⁵

In the elections, Gumede was eventually defeated by Seme by 39 votes to 14.¹⁴⁶ The bourgeois press commented approvingly at the time on the way in which the Chairman (Speaker) had acted against Gumede and his supporters throughout the course of the conference.¹⁴⁷ The ANC thus came under the control of a leadership whose clear priority was the pursuit of an alliance with capital. To aim at that alliance was one thing, to secure it completely, another. The ruling class, recurrently forced to look for alliances, never pursues alliances for their own sake. The

political objective of ruling class alliances is always the control and disciplining of the working class. In the period under discussion, the primary alliance through which that political goal was being pursued was that represented by the Pact. The alliance with the organised black petty bourgeoisie was, for the ruling class, a second option. The only way in which that situation could be opened up for change was if the black petty bourgeoisie presented itself as a better means through which to seek to control the working class. But, in the conditions obtaining in the period, the right wing elitist leadership of the ANC, seeking to promote an alliance with capital, grew more and more detached from the mass struggle.

In 1930, the CP had launched a pass-burning campaign which had met with some support, particularly in Durban.¹⁴⁸ In 1931, leading elements of the organised black petty bourgeoisie, representing the ANC, ICU and APO met in conference.¹⁴⁹ That this meeting occurred at all represents the force of the political pressures operating at the time. On the one hand, there was the pressure created by the resistance of black workers to the state attacks; on the other, there was growing concern amongst elements within the black petty bourgeoisie in the face of the viciousness of the state attacks - and the palpable failure of the alliance with sections of big capital to stop them. The conference focussed on the pass laws and decided, in 1931, to start a pass-burning campaign - in 1934.¹⁵⁰

Each day, the myriad of repressive measures which constitute the pass laws and their application was being resisted, at their point of application. That resistance included those with passes who broke specific regulations - such as the night curfew. It also included those many thousands of workers who were in the urban areas illegally. Pass law-related issues were often central to the localised struggles which developed in the period under consideration. At the same time, the state was seeking to extend and increase controls over workers in the urban areas. The time gap involved in the conference decision represented the extent to which those at the conference were distanced from the real rhythm of working class resistance. Similarly, there was a distance between the decision of the conference, and the form which the widespread resistance to the pass laws was already taking. The petty bourgeois leaders at the conference could use the limited support for the CP campaign to explain their own caution. The extent to which struggle was developing in this period - and the individualised mood of resistance which existed much more widely - suggest that the limitations on that support came not from a lack of combativity, but from a lack of preparation, and a failure to identify a course of action which seemed likely to succeed to workers. There was a caution in the response of workers to the state attacks. That caution was not leading workers to stop their defiance of the pass laws. It was making them seek ways of carrying through that defiance more successfully. To the majority of workers, the largely symbolic burning of passes clearly did not seem to provide such an avenue. The caution of workers held them back from moving from a form of

resistance which, in thousands of cases each day, was partly successful, to a form of symbolism which showed no clear signs of being stronger.

In the event, the struggle by workers continued - but the conference leaders made no attempt to embark on their agreed programme. By the time 1934 came, the very existence of the organisations of opposition was under serious question. In part, that question was posed by the severity of the state attacks. But it was also posed by the way in which the existing organisations and political leaders responded to those attacks - and to the opportunities, created by the mood of resistance amongst workers, for promoting a more widely organised resistance.

The national leadership of the ANC, in this period, had little direct connection with workers, or their struggle. Where ANC leaders did have a direct role in that struggle, this was at a local level, where the local leadership opposed the approach of the ANC nationally. In the Western Cape, the enfranchised petty bourgeoisie did not rely for its organised political life as heavily on the ANC as was the case in other provinces. Thaele, the Cape leader, did not even attend the 1930 conference which elected Seme.¹⁵¹ In these circumstances, it was easier for local leaders who were being radicalised by the struggle of the period to capture control of the local organisation. This was the case with Ndobe and Tonjeni in the Western Cape.¹⁵² Basing themselves on the widespread opposition to the imposition of poll taxes, they

called for a campaign of strikes and civil disobedience.¹⁵³ Congress meetings in the area were characterised by the way in which they became forums for workers to take up the range of issues facing them.¹⁵⁴ Under the leadership of Ndobe and Tonjeni, who were co-operating closely with Communists in the area, the ANC in the Western Cape came to be developed as an organisation of militant resistance. The militancy in the area was met by harsh state repression, with right-wing mobs joining with the police in attacking meetings and demonstrations.

The development of the ANC in the area on the basis of widespread grievances and receptivity to organisation, the nature of the state response and the conservatism of the established ANC leaders, are all graphically illustrated by developments in Worcester. This was a point at which the worsening economic conditions for workers on farms and in the towns were brought together - and this came to be reflected in the grievances which the local Congress took up. In this area, the local ANC became centrally caught up in exactly that type of growing confrontation which the petty bourgeois leadership of the ANC nationally and in the other provinces was seeking to avoid. Umsebenzi described the situation as follows:

"The platteland in the Western Province is an armed camp. Special detachments of police have been drafted to Worcester, Rawsonville, Barrydale and other centres. All records have been broken in the issue of licences for revolvers and guns to Europeans (Non Europeans of course are not allowed to carry

firearms to defend themselves).... And the cause of all the trouble. It is because a few weeks ago the native and Coloured farm labourers of Rawsonville dared to hold a meeting under the auspices of the ANC, at which they complained about their miserable wages and the fact that, in order to keep the wolf from the door, their wives had to go out and work in the kitchens of the European landowners.

"A gang of white farmers broke up that meeting with violence, and since that time, the Western Province has been an armed camp.... Feelings of Non Europeans have been further embittered by police raids on the Worcester location in search of Kaffir beer, prohibition in this country being for black men only. As a result of one of the raids, a black man has been killed."¹⁵⁵

On May Day, 1930, 400 workers defied a ban by the Town Clerk, and organised a May Day march through the main streets of the town.¹⁵⁶ On the Sunday following, police opened fire on the regular Congress meeting, killing five and wounding another 16.¹⁵⁷ The shootings were followed by further physical attacks:

"Following the shooting of non europeans by the police at Worcester last Sunday week, a mob of armed white hooligans took charge of the town. They assaulted a number of native and coloured people, but their main objective seems to have been to lay their hands on Ndobe and Tonjeni."¹⁵⁸

In the event, these two leaders, who were fast becoming local heroes, were hidden by workers in the area for four days.¹⁵⁹

In June, the state added legal measures to the physical attacks.

Umsebenzi reported:

"The new Riotous Assemblies Act was put into force for the first time last week. All public meetings, except religious ones have been prohibited in the districts of Worcester, Robertson. Montagu, and Swellendam on any Sunday from June 22 to September 21."¹⁶⁰

Thaele responded to the Worcester shootings by saying that neither side could be blamed.¹⁶¹ Meanwhile, he set about undermining the position of Ndobe and Tonjeni. To do this, he organised support in Cape Town itself, while the two militants were out in the more remote areas, campaigning and organising.¹⁶² Thaele opportunistically used the association of Ndobe and Tonjeni with white Communists - even while he was willing to support an alliance with white capitalists. Thaele was able to use the authoritarian tradition of Congress and expel 10 Cape Town militants.¹⁶³ A special Provincial Executive passed a resolution attacking the association of the radicals with the CP:

"Having noticed the spread of Bolshevistic tendencies among the Non-Europeans in the Western Province, Congress is of the opinion that leaders and propagandists with Communistic doctrines should not be allowed to address meetings organised by Congress. Further that the sale of literature published by the communists should be prohibited on premises owned by Congress...."¹⁶⁴

In a manoeuvre designed to divide the radicals, Ndobe was suspended and Tonjeni offered his position of Provincial Secretary. Ndobe and Tonjeni circulated a joint letter rejecting

the manoeuvre.¹⁶⁵

By this administrative action, Thaele was able to build a relatively strong position. But in the conditions of the period, a right-winger could not have taken complete control of the organisation by political opportunism alone. It was only through measures taken by the state that Thaele was able to defeat the opposition; conversely, because of the expulsions, manoeuvres, and confusion created by Thaele's attempt to maintain his position, the state was able to attack a militant Congress which had been weakened by self-inflicted wounds. Moves by the state against Thaele considerably helped his position. He was arrested on 22 June 1930, after more trouble at a closed Worcester meeting.¹⁶⁶ More than anything else, this helped Thaele gain credibility for the radical Garveyist rhetoric which he was employing to try to undermine the Communist-allied militants.¹⁶⁷ It has been suggested that Thaele was a police agent.¹⁶⁸ Certainly, his arrest could have been part of a prepared conspiracy. But whether that was the case or not, Thaele was objectively an agent of the ruling class, and his politics helped to provide the state with better conditions in which to attack the Congress militants.

They responded to the bureaucratic measures taken by Thaele by forming, in November 1930, the Independent ANC (IANC).¹⁶⁹ This organisation carried with it almost all the branches of Congress outside of Cape Town. At about the same time that the IANC was being formed, the attitude of the CP towards the Ndobe/Tonjeni

militants changed,¹⁷⁰ although individual CP members who were working with them do not appear to have followed the change fully. In September 1930, *Umsebenzi* carried an article under the title: "Crawlers v. Fighters in the ANC".¹⁷¹ The article predicted a split in the WP branch of the ANC, which was described as "hitherto the strongest and most militant section of the ANC". It discussed a division between the "good boys" and the militants. In the latter category, Gumede, Nzula (at that time, General Secretary of the CP) Ndobe and Tonjeni were all included. In *Umsebenzi* of 7 November and 14 November, there are non-committal articles describing the split in the Western Province ANC, and the inauguration of the IANC. The Communist Gomas was included in its leadership.

The shift of attitude becomes clear in the editorial of the next edition of *Umsebenzi* - 21 November 1930. Referring to the formation of the IANC, it writes:

"What has been the role of the CP in these events, and what attitude do we adopt to the new body? Perhaps our policy in the past has been a little too uncritical of the 'opposition'. Perhaps we have seen a struggle between 'lefts' and 'rights' where there has in reality only been a squabble between rival aspirants for leadership and where certain leaders have found it politic to adopt radical phraseology in order to win the support of the rank and file. We must ask ourselves the question. 'May not Ndobe and Tonjeni be sham 'lefts' and not real left-wingers after all, and may not our uncritical support of them lead to disillusionment and a sad blow to the CP when we discover

eventually that they are merely opportunists and not the fighting leaders we thought them to be?'

"We give our support to the new ANC and its fighting programme.... The policy of militancy is the policy of the working class. It is a policy that can only be carried out under the fighting leadership of the CP."

Later, as third period politics became fully entrenched, Ndobe and Tonjeni were dismissed along the lines suggested in the editorial.¹⁷²

The IANC captured the combativity which was being expressed in different ways, at a local level, in different parts of the country. But it was formed under the immediate and constant threat of mob attack. The murders and attacks of the last year had taken their toll, in terms of the confidence and depth of resistance amongst sections of the working class. The organisation did not have the strength of the urban centre of the area (although it should be noted that earlier in this period, there was an influx of workers in Ndabeni to the CP)¹⁷³; and Ndobe and Tonjeni were both under constant threat and attack. In September 1930, Tonjeni had been arrested.¹⁷⁴ In October 1930, Tonjeni and Ndobe had both been banned under the Riotous Assemblies Amendment Act of 1930 for six months from Worcester, Robertson, Montagu, Swellendam and George - the centres of their organisation.¹⁷⁵ Under the combined attacks of the police, right-wing mobs, an organised section of the petty bourgeoisie and the

courts, located in an area which was under near military rule - and isolated from the broader workers' movement and other organisations of resistance, the IANC began to disintegrate.

By 1932, the state offensive had secured a major defeat of the movement of opposition which had generated the ICU. A combination of the state offensive and the internal politics of the CP had decisively reversed the growth of the Party; the development of a method based more directly on the objective political situation had been retarded; the value of the increasing theoretical sophistication, evident in the writing of Nzula, was blocked by the dominance of third period orthodoxy; a layer of militants had been driven out of the Party and its political influence within the broader workers' movement had been almost completely destroyed. Where that influence persisted, it was through the politics of individuals, some of whom had in fact been expelled by the Party, but retained a loyalty to it.

The growth in the CP and AFTU membership had reflected the extent to which militants were willing to turn directly to the Party and the unions under its control. But this willingness developed in exactly the period in which the Party was being thrown into confusion and disorientation, and coming under the Bach/Wolton bureaucratic internal regime. Nonetheless, the pressures making for further developments of the struggle were to create, over time, the conditions for the reconstruction of the organisation. The Party was persistently able to draw on the authority of the Bolshevik revolution; workers had shown, even in the extremely difficult political conditions of the period that they were willing to move directly to the Party, in search of an organisational vehicle for struggle; and individual members and supporters of the Party had retained a concrete location within

the mass movement, even while the politics of the Party had undermined that.

The conditions for the survival of the Party are to be explained despite its politics, and the role which it played in the period. There is a recognition of this implicit in the self-criticism which CP historians make of the developments in the Party. They present the Bach/Wolton bureaucracy as something of an historical anachronism, between two phases of the development of the CP.¹⁷⁶ The adoption of the Black Republic programme is seen as being in a political continuity with the development post-1933 to a closer alliance with the black petty bourgeoisie and the ANC.¹⁷⁷ There is such a continuity, but the continuity in fact extends through the period under discussion.

As we have seen, the process through which the Black Republic programme was accepted was also the process through which the Party was opened up to the bureaucratic leadership which was being allowed to develop. At the same time, the politics of alliance with the black petty bourgeoisie, and the quest for an alternative vanguard to the working class, were also embodied within the Black Republic programme. Despite superficial appearances, underlying features of that politics were to persist through the ultra-left period. What was similar - and what was to remain similar through the history of the Party - was an empiricist method, and the concomitant of an idealist conception of the working class. In the case of those who followed the

initial politics of the Black Republic programme, the visible appearance of things was the basis for a political turn away from the working class. In the case of those who followed the third period interpretation, the revolutionary potential of the working class was presumed to be an immediate concrete reality. In each case, the working class was reduced to what it appeared to be at one moment. The appearance was then abstracted and hypostatized, and used as a theorised insight. The politics of the third period changed the content of what had gone before. But there was a continuity of political method. Once again, one aspect of the reality of the working class was abstracted, hypostatized, and then theoretically imposed upon a situation as if it were a full analysis of concrete reality. Thus it was that a similar political method could lead, at one moment, to the conclusion that there was a more revolutionary class than the working class; and the same method, at another moment, could lead to the conclusion that the revolutionary potential of the working class was immediately realisable. Both descriptions abstract the working class out of the real historical circumstances of the struggle - and use that abstraction as if it corresponds fully and immediately with concrete reality. One of the major reasons that militants within the Party were not equipped to deal with the rise of the bureaucracy was because they lacked a definitively different method.

What the CP historians do, then, is to obscure the real continuity which did exist - both through the third period, and between the initial politics of the Black Republic and the third

period. In the process, they obscure the real break of continuity - the way in which the development of a method based on a more concrete assessment of the dynamic of class forces was arrested. The impact of the underlying continuity of method, and the brake placed upon the development of an alternative method were both to be clearly reflected in the developing politics of the Party in the next period.

The state offensive laid the necessary basis for the industrial expansion which developed from 1933, establishing a balance of class forces favourable to capital, the provision of a mass of unorganised workers as a labour supply, and the political capacity to maintain cheap wage levels. But with the industrial expansion, the problem for the state of maintaining that balance of forces began to be posed anew. Even as the problems posed by the workers' movement and the economic crisis were being resolved in favour of the state, the problem of political control over the workers' movement was being reconstituted, on a level which the state had not yet had to deal with. Industrial expansion means subjecting workers to new conditions of discipline and exploitation. It means drawing workers from the family and the tribe into the collective experience of production. Concentrations of workers in the towns are consolidated and increased. And the state is faced with the need to impose its system of control on these expanding concentrations of workers. It was one thing for the state to win the conditions necessary for industrial expansion. It was another to actually impose the

meaning of that expansion onto workers. The state was faced with a situation in which the very process of taking the measures which the balance of forces made possible was likely to promote a set of economic and social demands; new conditions of proletarian life were likely to stimulate new resistance. And the very fact of industrial expansion gave to the working class - and within the working class to the black workers - an increased social weight.

At the same time, the state was still faced with the task of maintaining and consolidating the class alliance which was necessary to provide it with the social base from which to organise its rule. The police and township authorities had been severely strained in imposing control over the movement of the 1920's. Now the increasing urban concentration of the working class, its increasing social weight - and the political and economic demands which would flow from these processes - were set to create a far greater problem of control for the state. Despite the defeats imposed on the movement of resistance, and the shift in the political balance of forces which that brought, the challenge to the balance of forces was already being reconstituted, beneath the surface.

The fact that the urban centres were the economic power-houses of the country was now being reflected in actual mass struggle, organisation and demands. While the political defeats imposed by the state shifted the political balance of forces and provided the political conditions necessary for fast economic growth (i.e.

extended and increased exploitation), the same process was creating conditions whereby an increasingly large, urbanised black working class was being consolidated. The result of this was that the objective conditions making for class identity as workers amongst the mass of blacks were considerably strengthened. The political consequence of this development would come to the fore, over time.

In 1933, the NP and SAP formed an electoral alliance,¹⁷⁸ and in 1934 this was carried through into the fusion of the two parties to form the United Party (UP).¹⁷⁹ Bunting explains fusion in terms of Hertzog's fear of losing the coming election, and his personality.¹⁸⁰ Kaplan represents the process out of which fusion emerged as a "dislocation between class interest and the party political representation of this interest".¹⁸¹ For Lerumo, it was an anti-working class conspiracy.¹⁸² None of these ex post facto positions, or the analyses behind them, moves qualitatively beyond the understanding of fusion developed by Nzula at the time.¹⁸³

Nzula, notwithstanding the influence of Third Period politics, reveals core elements in the process leading to fusion. He recognised the differential impact of the economic crisis, pointing to the "fabulous profits [being made] on the Gold Mines of the Witwatersrand, especially since South Africa abandoned the Gold Standard ..."; while "[o]ne of the results of the world economic crisis on South Africa has been its unprecedented

severity in the field of agriculture". He also pointed to the impact of the economic crisis insofar as the supply of labour for the mines was concerned: "The crisis has solved one of the burning questions between the Chamber of Mines and the farmers, i.e. the problem of native labour supply." On the basis of these developments, and the impact of the economic crisis generally, there was widespread discontent "among the farmers and landlords, as well as large sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie and white workers". For Nzula, this was the basis upon which fusion developed. The Malanites were "nothing but the most cunning supporters of the capitalist system in South Africa, whose job is to keep the white workers and especially the Afrikaans speaking section, in bondage to capitalist and semi-feudal politics".¹⁸⁴

Their collaboration within the Pact government had consolidated the NP and LP as instruments for ruling class control over the working class. They had been used to draw white workers and their organisations into structures of collaboration; to look to Parliament for the solution to their problems; to channel their grievances against blacks, rather than the ruling class; to attack the living standards of small white farmers and white workers; to set up a system of industrial legislation which reflected the interests of the ruling class, and as a social base in the state attacks against the black workers and oppressed petty bourgeoisie. Together, these two parties had exercised political control over a large majority of white workers.

In the period under discussion, as we have seen, dissatisfaction

amongst sections of the electoral base of the Pact parties had been growing. This was reflected in the Colesberg bye-election, in which the NP narrowly retained the seat,¹⁸⁵ and the Germiston bye-election, in which the SAP won an LP seat.¹⁸⁶ The capitalist depression hit particularly hard at the white small farmers who made up an important part of the electoral base of the NP. This had resulted in the movement to the towns of large numbers of failed Afrikaner farmers,¹⁸⁷ and a growing anger at the banks and big capitalists who, between them, were profiting from the economic plight of these people. In the towns there developed large concentrations of unemployed whites, embittered by "their" government, whose two election victories had involved a range of economic promises. O'Meara points out that by "September 1933, approximately 22% of all white and coloured males (188,000 men) were officially registered as unemployed."¹⁸⁸ Where these people did find work, they were almost exclusively absorbed into unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. Both the NP, and the divided LP - party of the weakening craft unions - were targets of growing resentment."¹⁸⁹

Hertzog faced additional problems, from another source. In 1931, Britain had gone off the gold standard.¹⁹⁰ The big capitalists in South Africa mounted a growing campaign for Hertzog to follow suit. This finally developed into the withdrawal of capital on a large scale, in order to create pressure on the government to follow Britain and abandon the gold standard.¹⁹¹ The Nationalists were faced with two options: either they could seek to promote their position inside the ruling class by following the dictates

of big capital; or they could turn to the growing dissatisfaction amongst their electoral base, and seek to use it as a lever of pressure with which to secure and promote their interests within the ruling class. Both courses posed political problems. The first meant effectively relinquishing a crucial part of the anti-Hoggenheimer rhetoric, which was so central to Afrikaner nationalism's appeal to white workers, to pursue a political alliance with the major party of big capital. But the value of the NP for big capital in any such alliance depended, in large part, on the political hold of the Nationalists over their electoral base in the first place. The second meant promoting political opposition amongst those whose class interests directed against capital, in order to gain a more powerful position within the ranks of the ruling class.

Different elements within the nationalist movement were, over time, to take the latter course.¹⁹² Hertzog had little option but to take the former. A leadership which had spent two terms of government disciplining the working class cannot easily shift to try to organise controlled opposition within the working class. Hertzog himself had become identified with the big capitalist interests which he served, and would have lacked credibility as a new leader of those who were being dispossessed, or economically attacked, to the advantage of those same interests. The only route to continued power and a secure place within the ranks of the ruling class lay in a deal with big capital. Despite repeated protestations that he would never move in that direction, Hertzog responded to the pressure from the ruling class and took South

Africa off the gold standard.¹⁹³

For the big capitalists, this seemed to create the opportunity to assert more direct control over an increasingly important section of white workers. The popular frontist Pact represented a form of alliance with the white workers into which capital had, in part, been forced. Given the self-inflicted weakness of the LP, and the declining support for the NP, the possibility seemed to be opening up, for big capital, of reconstructing that alliance on a more acceptable basis, while retaining political control over the other petty bourgeois element of the social base of the ruling class. A political realignment with the NP would further marginalise the LP, placing it under increased political pressure to maintain the collaboration which it had always offered the ruling class. Elements within the ruling class misread the Germiston bye-election results to confirm their thinking. Big capital began to use the uncertainty within the Nationalist leadership to that end. Pressure began to grow within the ranks of that leadership for an alliance between the NP and the SAP.¹⁹⁴ Despite his promises and protestations, Hertzog was being ineluctably driven towards such an alliance. It was duly formed, in 1933, and carried forward into the fusion of the two parties, to form the United Party, in 1934.¹⁹⁵

The immediate pre-history of fusion was a period of sustained and aggressive class conflict, political turmoil, and economic crisis. By the time of fusion South Africa was already clearly

emerging from the economic crisis.¹⁹⁶ For the ruling class, the prospects of a united party of capital appeared to carry with them the prospects of sustained political stability as well. At a time when the struggle of white workers had been defused through the popular front, and the struggle of black workers defeated, problems in controlling the working class may not have been at the forefront of big capital's thinking as the moves towards fusion developed.

Nonetheless, there was opposition to Hertzog's suggestion that Creswell should be included in the Cabinet;¹⁹⁷ and the programme of fusion included a firm declaration "against any policy which has for its object the tendency to advance class warfare, or to sacrifice any interests of the people in favour of organised capitalism."¹⁹⁸ The fact that the struggle of the working class was not apparent at the forefront of bourgeois thinking as fusion developed is itself a part of the explanation of the process. The extent to which the bourgeois parties believed that the white workers would follow where they led can be explained by the effectiveness, for capital, of the popular front. That key analysts of fusion have effectively ignored the white workers in the same way, is the product of an analytical approach which seeks to explain developments in class society primarily in terms of the relations within the ruling class.

A group of Nationalists under Malan broke from Hertzog, expressing and seeking to mobilise, inter alia, the discontent amongst parts of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie.¹⁹⁹ For the first

time, although in a tentative way, organised Afrikaner nationalism turned also to the question of developing a base of working class support. In 1935, Die Raad Van Trustees was formed to fulfil that role.²⁰⁰ A Malanite expressed their fears: "Coalition will drive our poor classes into the hands of the Bolsheviks because they will have no other spokesmen."²⁰¹

It was only later that this tentative turn was fully carried through - and only when it was did the political strength of Afrikaner nationalism reach a point where it could once again be used as a political lever which the ruling class as a whole could not ignore. Already at this early stage, the embryo existed of what was to develop into the historical role of Malanite Afrikaner nationalism. But, before that happened, the Malanites would have to capture the political support of the developing social layer of Afrikaans workers. At the time of the split within the ranks of Afrikaner nationalism, that was still a task which lay ahead. Even before there was any consistent attempt to exploit these, there were openings for Nationalist agitators to use the conditions facing Afrikaans workers, to seek to develop the political influence of Afrikaner Nationalism over these workers. The first important success for the Nationalists emerged within a relatively short period on the Railways.²⁰² The only ways of disrupting this process involved either an aggressive defence of independent unionism by the white union leaders, and a campaign by them to organise and protect Afrikaans workers; or it meant the existence of an organised movement of black workers

which was so powerful that it could impress its strength on these workers and draw them towards it. (The former option would have involved the latter.) In both cases political leadership was necessary in order to achieve those results. The reality was that state attacks removed the latter possibility. And the racist politics and conservatism of the majority of union leaders were enormous obstacles to the former.

In the same period, the sectarian policies of the CP had largely removed its capacity to influence the actual political process. The established craft unions made no serious attempt to organise the Afrikaans workers. Exclusivist criteria for apprenticeships were often used to keep Afrikaners out of skilled jobs.²⁰³ It was mainly within the growing industrial unions that Afrikaners, who made up the bulk of unskilled and semi-skilled white labour, were organised.²⁰⁴ As the case of the garment workers shows, where there was a relatively militant lead presented to them, many Afrikaans workers were willing to take it. But, in the great majority of cases, that lead was not forthcoming.

The result of the policies of the majority of the union and LP leadership was that the Afrikaans workers were turned away from the organisations of white workers. This does not mean that these workers simply turned to the right. In the eyes of many of them, the existing organisations of white workers were seen as inadequate because they were so totally tied up with and committed to the interests of big capital and the government. The

reality is that the question of the political course which these workers would follow was opened up in this period. A minority of such workers, presented with the option of a degree of independent unionism - the Afrikaans women in the clothing industry - took it. Amongst many Afrikaans workers, including some of the women in the clothing industry, the simplistic, anti-big capital, anti-black propaganda of Nationalist agitators began, over time, to strike a chord. This occurred in a context in which other important social institutions - notably the church and the family- were often repeating a form of the same message. So the process out of which the Afrikaner Nationalists came to politically dominate the white workers was in motion - but it was not completed, nor was it the only process which the objective conditions made possible.

In his analysis of fusion Nzula wrote: "The Malanites, the Vissers, serve to distract the attention of the poor white farmers and workers from the real issue and thus prevent the genuine element of revolt among these classes to mature." He continued: "These people are all agents of the bourgeoisie, the agents of the capitalists in the ranks of the poor white farmers and workers whose reactionary feudalistic policies must be thoroughly exposed".²⁰⁵ The politics of the third period asserts that the economic crisis (from which South Africa was already emerging) could not be resolved. The continuing crisis would itself serve to break the illusions of the poor white farmers and workers - but, they would be tricked by the Malanites.

On the basis of this approach, the CP, in 1935, began the publication of "Die Aarbeider en Arme Boer".²⁰⁶ In accordance with its method, the Party was responding to a set of superficial, sometimes apparently contradictory, developments. There was a tendency, arising out of the politics of the third period, to attribute to the isolated case of co-operation between black and white workers an a-historical depth and solidity which they did not have.²⁰⁷ There were deep-rooted grievances amongst Afrikaans workers and unemployed - at a time when the organised wings of the labour movement were obviously in retreat. Moreover, a turn to Afrikaans workers was a politically consistent move by a third period leadership which was facing a developing opposition to its policies within the CP.

At the beginning of 1933 the Woltons, suddenly and without the agreement of the Party, left South Africa.²⁰⁸ The Party, almost completely crippled, was left in the hands of Bach. The weak state of the Party had made it relatively easy for the Bach/Wolton leadership to maintain a bureaucratic grip. Leading critics or potential critics had already been expelled. The attacks against the workers' movement and the decline in struggle meant that there was no immediate pressure from the workers' struggle itself promoting the confidence of any opposition. But Bach was not able to maintain control of the decimated Party for long. In 1933 Moses Kotane returned from the USSR, and an opposition grouping began to develop around him.²⁰⁹

A number of factors combined to promote a turn, by elements

within the CP, away from the politics of the third period. The blanket denunciations of the petty bourgeoisie made by the CP had ignored the material reality of the oppression which the black petty bourgeoisie faced, and also the enormous social and economic differences between different elements within the petty bourgeoisie. A section of the black membership of the CP was itself derived from the black petty bourgeoisie, and could feel the political pressures operating within their class. The reality was that these did not conform to the simplistic denunciations with which the CP had defined the black petty bourgeoisie en masse. The level of struggle during the preceding period had radicalised elements within the petty bourgeoisie. The defeats of the workers' movement had led to a decline in working class action; but the political developments which followed that defeat were such as to promote a continuing radicalisation amongst elements within the petty bourgeoisie. There also persisted a residue of support for the organisations which had developed in that struggle - the ICU and in particular, the IANC.

The savage repression with which the state had responded to the struggles of the preceding period meant, for a section of the black petty bourgeoisie, that the prospect of reforms was receding. During the heightened struggle of the preceding period, the petty bourgeoisie had lacked an organisation through which it could seek to maintain an independent position. The Seme leadership of the ANC had responded to the state attacks by increasing its quest for allies with a section of the state. The

Cape voters' organisations were in the grip of established capitalist and pro-capitalist leaderships. On the basis of the radicalisation which the struggle of the period had promoted amongst a section of the petty bourgeoisie, and in the face of the failure of the Seme leadership strategy to keep open the option of reforms, a left-wing opposition developed inside the ANC.²¹⁰ The existence of this opposition was clearly expressed at the 1932 ANC conference. The fusion process promoted the growth of such an opposition, making more immediate the threat of political attacks against the black petty bourgeoisie.

In 1929, the Hertzog Bills had been withdrawn.²¹¹ Superficially, this was because of the opposition from the SAP. The reality was that they were withdrawn while the Pact parties dealt with the immediate political priority - the attacks against the workers' movement. Once that priority had been successfully carried through, the political conditions were created for the Hertzog Bills to be introduced again. The possible alliance of resistance between the black petty bourgeoisie and the working class had failed to materialise. Then the immediate prospect of such an alliance had been undermined by the severity and impact of the state attacks. And fusion now presented Hertzog with the parliamentary majority which he needed.

For elements within the SAP, who had opposed the Hertzog Bills, the state attacks had revealed that an alliance with the black petty bourgeoisie was not a necessary condition of political

control over black workers. In addition, the value of the black franchise in the Cape had been heavily eroded. (At the 1929 election there were nearly 42,000 black voters, out of a total of 452,000.)²¹² The swartgevaar election campaign of 1929, the Womens Enfranchisement Act of 1930,²¹³ and the Franchise Laws Amendment Act collectively ensured that result.²¹⁴

For big capital, coalition and fusion were political mechanisms which appeared to provide them with the prospect of direct political control over the social base of the ruling class. With those developments went the medium term prospect of reversing some of the economic costs of the "privileged position" of the white workers. But the economic attacks by the popular front government, and the economic developments, which began occurring as early as 1932, meant that, for big capital, the pressure for moving directly against the economic position of the white workers was considerably lessened. The attacks of the preceding period had secured an adequate supply of black labour, cheap enough for the immediate needs of profitable industrial expansion. But fusion itself could not be achieved without some cost. Economically, this immediately meant the relatively minor measure of increased state aid to white farmers,²¹⁵ and the Excess Profits Act.²¹⁶ It also meant that sections of big capital, who had always tried to keep open the option of an alliance with the petty bourgeoisie, were forced into a political retreat on the issue.

Sections of the black petty bourgeoisie responded to the

situation by turning to the government and white political parties with pledges of loyalty and moral appeals. Umteteli declared hopefully:

"General Hertzog still presses for the passage of his Native Bills, but it is practically certain that they will not be dealt with during the life of the coalition government; and there is reason to believe that when the Bills are again introduced their main provisions will be substantially modified."²¹⁷

A later edition of the paper continues the line of argument:

"It is inconceivable that these political elements [in the SAP] will surrender their convictions: or that the nation will acquiesce in a fusion policy likely to deprive the Native of the principles he has so long enjoyed.... We can express our belief that those who, apart from the Native intelligentsia, have the interests of Africans at heart, will fight any such proposal to the bitter end.... Fortunately we are not without friends - and powerful ones at that! We look to them to support us in our effort to see that justice is done. And we feel that we shall not look in vain."²¹⁸

These were methods which, earlier, had appeared to be successful in defending the Cape franchise. But amongst a minority of the organised petty bourgeoisie, particularly when the hopes in "powerful friends" began to seem misplaced, there was a substantial shift to the left. Sidzumo, writing in *Umteteli* reflects a part of this mood, even amongst conservatives and moderates:

"Hitherto the African cherished an implied hope, however vacillating, for his political and economic protection and security in the South African Party.... Now that the South African Party has virtually been absorbed into the Nationalist Party, or vice versa, ... the African realises he stands little or no chance of a tangible realisation of his political aspirations and a substantial redress of his grievances."²¹⁹

The increasing collaboration between the NP and the SAP fuelled the growing belief amongst a section of the black petty bourgeoisie that the struggle for reforms could not be won simply through appeals to the liberals. Fusion could only confirm this view - which already had a historical tradition established under the Gumede leadership. Fusion did not simply mean that the likelihood of reforms through an alliance with big capital receded even further. It also brought onto the agenda the increasingly immediate possibility of attacks through the Hertzog Bills. It was the overt removal of the prospects of an effective alliance with sections of the state, and the equally overt threat of attacks, which lay behind a continued radicalisation amongst elements within the petty bourgeoisie - even while the workers' movement was in retreat. It was to this radicalisation that elements within the CP began to respond - just as there had been an orientation to Kadalie and then Gumede when they were radicalised. As part of the same process, there was a reaction against the politics of the Party, which had become more and more removed from the concrete situation.

In 1934, this response, consistent with the method of the Party, but in direct contradiction with the politics of the third period, came to be crystallised in an opposition which developed in the Cape around Moses Kotane.²²⁰ After a tour of Party branches, he wrote to the Johannesburg District Party Committee (effectively the Party leadership), pointing to the separation of the Party from the actual political situation.²²¹ Kotane had "started [his] observations in Queenstown among the African intellectuals" whom he found to be most concerned "for their dependent economic position". He had then started working "among the non-intellectual section of the native people". They were "the most interesting of the whole lot". They were "revolutionary but have not yet learnt the weapon of organisation and some of them are misled by ministers...." He argued that "our Party members (especially the whites) ... subordinate South Africa in the interests of Europe, in fact, ideologically they are not South Africans, they are foreigners who know nothing about and who are not the least interested in the country in which they are living at present." He argued that "the majority of the African working population are more national conscious than class conscious", pointing out that there was a still strong support for the IANC. He called for the Party to become "more Africanised", "more Bolshevised", and to "speak the language of the Native masses and ... know their demands". According to Kotane, sectarian denunciations of leaders like Tonjeni "would simply be tactless".

Kotane's letter blurs class distinctions among the "non-intellectual section of the Native people", and offers no understanding of the urban working class. It also misassesses what was in effect the residue of support for the IANC, remaining after the forward drive of the organisation had been defeated. But it provided a challenge to some of the abstraction of the Party. And the call it made "to study the conditions in this country and concretise the demands of the toiling masses from first hand information" laid the basis for further challenges. But the divisions within the Party were not taken up on that basis.

Within a short period, the policies of the Party were overtaken by new developments of the policies of the Comintern. Bach at first attempted to control the situation through the use of bureaucratic powers.²²² But the position which Kotane was putting forward was too attractive to elements within the Party for it to be ordered out of existence. The reality is that the politics of the initial interpretation of the Black Republic programme, primarily the orientation to the black petty bourgeoisie, had persisted amongst elements within the Party through the whole period. Now that the objective conditions appeared to deny the politics of the third period and confirm those of the second so conclusively, they became more and more confident in putting forward their positions. In addition, in a period in which the authority of the Comintern had come to be reified within the Party, Kotane, recently returned from the Soviet Union, could assume some of that authority. Faced with this situation, Bach

attempted to invoke Comintern decisions, and went to the Soviet Union to seek endorsement for his policies against the opposition.²²³ He arrived, however, at a time when the Comintern was carrying through a reversal of policy. Far from receiving endorsement, it seems that he was one of the thousands who were executed at that time.²²⁴

CHAPTER FOUR

1935 - 1939

"In 1934 that was the year that marked my disrespect for the white man. I worked at a laundry. I used to earn one pound ten shillings a month and I used to sleep in a house full of bugs and my food was bad. Then in 1938 somebody came along by the name of Wilfred he had an assistant called Freddie they organised us to join the trade union. Our employer protested extremely. The people used to start at six in the morning, they used to knock off at 5.30 in the afternoon. Since then what we discovered was that the long period we worked for was cut.

"Then again in 1939 came in the Wage Board, then there was a slight increase in wages, then little by little they gave us some increments. In 1939 it [the union] was left to drop because according to the custom of Africans once they see some betterment then they leave struggle, as a result the union became weaker and weaker and the employer started oppressing us once more. Then we said, but surely the trade union was helping us. Again we combined, it was true once more we saw some true and good development."¹

For No Sizwe, the period 1935 to 1945 is "the pivotal period" in South African politics.² For Tabata, 1935 saw an unprecedented "awakening of the masses".³ Both of these analysts express their viewpoint via a consideration primarily of the political developments within and between petty bourgeois organisations. In different ways, they reflect the tendency of analysts of this period to seek to explain the course of political developments by focussing on developments within the state and/or the petty bourgeoisie. I will be arguing that in this period, there were three political processes underway which, together, formed the

most **dynamic** political components of the balance of class forces.

- The **resurgence** and development of the movement of black workers;

- The upsurge of organised political opposition within the black petty bourgeoisie;

- The growth of influence by organised Afrikaner Nationalists amongst white workers.

The purpose of this section is to investigate the first two processes, and consider the relationship between them. The third process will be touched on briefly, and considered more fully in a later section.⁴

In the period 1935-1939, there were two main developments which suggest that the working class was beginning to move forward, out of the defeats of the preceding period; firstly, the growth of unions, and, secondly, clear signs of mounting tension, and a growing combativity amongst workers in the black urban areas. In general, the period under discussion was one characterised by a lack of formal organisation amongst black workers. Despite this, small black unions continued to exist. Although, in the early stages in particular, these unions only involved a tiny percentage of the workers,⁵ their very existence is testimony to the possibility for working class organisation which did exist at the time; their growth is testimony to the extension of that possibility and a receptivity to unionism amongst growing numbers of workers.

In 1935, Max Gordon, regarded variously as an actual or a nominal Trotskyist, became Secretary of the African Laundry Workers Union.⁶ This was one of the unions which had been set up by the Communists in 1928, and was part of AFTU. From this position, he was to play a large role in the development of unions centred in Johannesburg and Pretoria. It is significant that this initial development of unionism, after the state attacks of the preceding period, should be in an industry in which there had been a history of industrial organisation amongst black workers. The way in which the defeats had been inflicted on the workers' movement meant that the basic organisational framework of the union, to the extent that it had existed, had not itself been destroyed.

As we have seen, the combination of state attacks and leadership policies did have, as one of their consequences, the near collapse of AFTU. But this did not occur in a direct test of strength between the unions and the state. Rather, it was through attacks at other points that the state secured a victory with wider implications. The indirect way in which state attacks had led to the the substantial weakening of AFTU made it likely that in the experience and perception of at least some workers connected with the unions, there was no dominant feeling of weakness attached to those unions. The more likely situation was that, for workers who could escape, or were emerging from, the general feeling of demoralisation after the defeats, the unions were seen (to the extent that they were visible) as a way forward.⁷

After a period of attacks and defeats in the experience of the workers' movement, no policy, however correct, can define the impact of the defeats out of existence. Whatever happens, the working class needs a period of time to emerge out of the feelings of demoralisation, powerlessness, and the impact of the new conditions on the shop-floor and in the community, which a defeat imposes upon them and their organisations. The preservation of already existing forms of independent class organisation means that as the mood begins to change amongst sections of the working class, and the resurgence begins to develop, workers can find an already existing framework through which their independent needs and interests can be taken up, and class action considered and organised.

The initial success of attempts to promote unionism was based on the receptivity of workers to the form of organisation which unionists like Gordon were presenting. They could also draw on the recent, albeit limited, experience of unionism, without having to cope with the problem of the morale of workers whose commitment to unionism had been drained in a real trial of strength with the state. Initially, that receptivity could only exist amongst a small minority of workers - and the resources of the union could only allow a small minority of workers to be reached. But that small minority, very quickly, became a growing minority. And the "message of unionism" very quickly spread. Within a short period, Gordon had become General Secretary of a group of seven unions, united under the umbrella of the Joint

Committee. In 1940, Bill Andrews put the membership at 19,920.⁸

The second AFTU union which was still in existence in 1935 was the African Clothing Workers' Union, whose General Secretary was Gana Makabeni.⁹ In 1936, working closely with Communists, he began to form several new unions, and later that year a Co-ordinating Committee was set up, at a conference with delegates from Clothing, Building, Timber, Meat, Mining, Stone, Dairy, Furniture and Bedding, and Baking Workers' Unions.¹⁰ The membership of all these unions was small (e.g. Clothing, 1939, 500),¹¹ and in 1940, Andrews was to put to full membership at not more than 4,000.¹²

Does the small size of the unions mean that they can not really be used as evidence for the beginnings of a resurgence in the workers' movement? The combined membership of the two union Federations at the end of the period under discussion was a small fraction of the total workforce. But the membership levels, although small, are an early stage in what was to prove to be a generally upward trend,¹³ although there were temporary falls within that general trend. The unions which were developed in the second half of the 1930's were to form an essential part of the foundation upon which the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) was formed, with a membership reaching more than 150,000¹⁴ in the 1940's. Nor should the membership levels be regarded as anywhere near the upper limit, in terms of potential union support. The material problems in the way of union organisation were enormous. Black unions could not be given state registration;¹⁵ the tradition of unionism was not deeply embedded

in the experience of black workers, especially in view of the large numbers coming to the towns for the first time, and being employed in new jobs of the post-1933 economic expansion;¹⁶ there was an enormous turnover of black workers in all industries - Hirson points to the fact that unionism was generally most solidly established in industries with a higher than average permanency;¹⁷ union organisers and workers had to contend with a myriad of repressive laws. These factors meant not only that there were many workers who would not be likely to join unions, but also that there were many workers who, while willing to join unions, could not be reached, or had to move from one area to the other, or from one job to the other, or who were unemployed.

In addition, in the eyes of some workers, unions would be seen, not as collective weapons, but as barriers to their own advancement, used against them by white workers.¹⁸ There is a noticeable contrast in the position of white garment workers, in an industry where black unionism developed, and white miners, in an industry where it only developed much later. In the former case, white workers were often productive workers;¹⁹ in the latter, their jobs were become increasingly supervisory.²⁰ This different starting point promoted differences in the approaches of the white workers concerned towards unionism, and towards black workers. It was also one of the factors creating a different workplace environment in the different industries. In the experience of black workers, the existence of a layer of white workers can be like working under the direct supervision of

management. White workers, in addition to supervisors, can be experienced as a layer of workplace "policemen" for the employer. Where those workers are organised into a strong trade union, the union can itself come to be seen as a part of management (a role which some unions in those circumstances actually do play). At a time when the confidence of black workers was only beginning to develop, when on the whole they were moving relatively tentatively towards building their own class organisation, in an environment which was fundamentally new to many of them, the immediate fact of a layer of physical supervision at the workplace militates against the easy development of the resurgence which was beginning to take place. And where that layer of supervision is additionally experienced as a division within the ranks of the working class, and seen as a well-organised (unionised) layer, the pressures against a turn to unionism are compounded.

There were substantial obstacles, then, to the growth of receptivity to unionism by the mass of black workers. Those same obstacles stood in the way of a growth of militant action. The dynamic factor in the situation was the growing willingness of workers to organise, despite and against those obstacles. That growing willingness was to be reflected in the actual development of organisation and action in the period. But it extended, beneath the surface of appearances, far more widely than is made clear by those indicators.

The reaction of some elements within the state bureaucracy to the

development of the unions was not based on an understanding of the underlying process which that development reflected. Later in the period under discussion there were proposals from within the Department of Labour that the black unions be allowed official registration.²¹ Following the thinking of the state, this has led some analysts to attribute to the unions a particular "moderation".²² To do so, without a full appreciation of the underlying process, is to hypostatise "militancy" and seek to understand trade unions outside of the historical context in which they have their existence.

The question of what approach the state should take to the unions was posed in a situation in which two factors were particularly significant: firstly, the industrial expansion underway was to bring growing pressure for a secure supply of semi-skilled and skilled labour;²³ secondly, the balance of forces in this period was favourable to the state. The workers' movement had still not recovered from the impact of the attacks and defeats which it had suffered. The government had proved able, after a long process, to secure the political conditions in which it was able to put the Hertzog Bills on the statute book, and draw the majority of the organised black petty bourgeoisie into operating within the framework of the state structures which those new laws created.²⁴ The economy was expanding.²⁵ Different sections of the ruling class and the white petty bourgeoisie were collaborating within the framework of the relatively newly formed UP. The situation seemed to be one of stable state control over potential sources of opposition.

The reality, as we have seen, was different. But bourgeois ideology is inherently and inescapably focussed on surface appearances. With a political vision constructed by that ideology, elements of the state bureaucracy and the ruling class could not be expected to see the real underlying dynamic, the process of resurgence underway within the working class. Without an understanding of that dynamic, neither could they be expected to always choose the policies which best suited the interests of the ruling class. Indeed, whatever course of action is pursued by the state, it will always contain seeds for future social tension and conflict. The very industrial expansion underway was in fact laying part of the foundation for the working class organisation, demands and action of the future. Whatever measures are taken by the state to maximise profits, they will contain contradictions which hold the seeds of the social crisis of the future, and which, over time, will exacerbate and fuel social tension and struggle. But bourgeois ideology can not give a clear vision of these things. Elements within the ruling class and amongst its agents see in the appearance of social stability the actual existence of that stability. They see in the apparent effectiveness of their control over the workers' movement the continued effectiveness of that control.

It is true that the ruling class and its agents have the experience of class rule to draw on; and that they must have a certain understanding of reality to maintain capitalist class

rule and profits. But no amount of experience or understanding can reveal for them a course of action which removes the basis of class conflict and secures a genuine and a lasting stability in capitalist control. After a decisive victory over the workers' movement, there are always capitalists who believe that their final victory has been won, that the class struggle is over. Even more so is that the case when that victory has allowed them to impose on workers the conditions necessary for an industrial expansion. Like bourgeois historians and analysts, the capitalists believe in the natural stability, not the natural instability, of their rule. They develop a misplaced confidence which is fuelled by things as they appear to be - by the apparent effectiveness of their control and the apparent passivity of the masses. Within the capitalist class, and amongst the ranks of those it employs to run the institutions of its rule, there start developing blueprints for social engineering. These plans generally tend to assume that the conditions created by the defeats of the past can be secured for all time. It is in this way that elements within the state apparatus start developing schemes for orderly trade unionism. In effect, these are seen as instruments through which the passivity of the masses can be regulated, and the labour requirements of capital serviced. When capitalists blame working class struggle on agitators, they are not always simply using propaganda. Sometimes, they are reflecting the fact that they can never properly understand that the very functioning of their system creates a dynamic, always operating within the working class, making for the development of struggle. Elements within the ruling class and amongst their

agents were still wondering how to proceed with the recognition of trade unions when the mass struggles of 1942 overtook them. They were still considering the measures which they believed had been made possible by their last victory when a new wave of struggle developed.

The state does not always have existing and ready-made forms of control which it can deploy against a working class whose will to struggle and social weight are both developing. In the mid-1930's, the state had not yet fully developed the forms of control, and the experience of control, over the relatively new, expanded urban industrial working class communities.²⁶ It was in conditions of apparent political stability, with a structurally changed working class, and an economy in which the labour requirements of capital were changing, that the plans for recognition of the black trade unions were put forward as one response, developed by elements within the state. The serious consideration and support for the recognition of black trade unions, in fact, tells us about the politics of the state rather than the moderation of the unions. To see the politics of the state as emerging from the moderation of the unions is to ignore the real political dynamics at work, to focus on appearances rather than the underlying processes, to allow the state a capacity for strategic thinking and a stability which it did not have.

In their functioning, the Joint Committee Unions focussed mainly

on the attempt to secure "favourable" wage determinations, and on seeking to ensure that employers complied with these determinations.²⁷ There can be little doubt that the major attraction which the unions offered to workers was the hope of at least some limited success on the issue of wages. In January 1940 the unions held a rally, after a wage determination. The response of Mokgatle must have been widespread amongst black workers at the time:

"The purpose of the meeting was to celebrate an event which was worth celebrating, the coming into force of industrial law in the commercial and distributive trades, which for the first time covered African workers in that field of South African industry. A minimum wage was laid down for unskilled men in the industry, which of course meant African workers."²⁸

At a time when the resurgence of the workers' movement was still in its initial phase, the test of the Joint Committee Unions was not in the number of strikes they had, nor in the militancy of their public declarations. The value or otherwise of the unions to the working class generally lay in the extent to which they fulfilled a need posed by the concrete situation of the workers' movement. At least for the many thousands of workers who joined them, and for probably many more workers who looked to them, the Joint Committee Unions in the period under consideration provided a form of independent class organisation - a framework within which the resurgence underway could be articulated and developed.

In December 1936, SAW reported the escalation of action, under

the headline " Growing militancy of Native Workers":

"Almost daily we get the news in our daily press of Native workers coming out on strike against the inhuman conditions of work and particularly the brutal way in which those in authority are treating them."²⁹

The article proceeds to report five strikes, including two at mines (Jumpers Deep Gold and Luipaardsvlei), as well as a strike of 800 laundry workers in Johannesburg. In that strike, 13 strike leaders were arrested. But they were discharged on a technicality, and the strike led to an improvement in wages.³⁰

Hirson concludes, on the basis of this strike, and that in September 1937 of workers at a steel construction site,³¹ that: "Strike action in these pre-war years was not feasible. Despite the impatience in the shops and the factories over the refusal of the bosses to increase wages, the workers had to be restrained until the unions could be built up."³² Although the resurgence was well underway by 1937, it is probably unlikely that the mass of workers were immediately ready to strike - and certainly unlikely that the unions could have restrained them if they chose to. For those workers in the Joint Council Unions, however, the tactics which the union leaders were employing probably did have the effect of making strikes less likely. The result is that the statistics on the escalating action,³³ while clearly expressing a break from the 1933 slough, do not fully capture the depth of the resurgence which was underway. The mass of unorganised (employed) workers were still heading to the point at which they decided to strike. But the tension which was developing was

clearly expressed by outbursts of violent struggle in different black communities.

The developing anger came to be expressed around the Native Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1937,³⁴ and the measures taken to enforce it in the growing urban concentrations. SAW summarised the Act as meaning: the increased likelihood of arrest and "deportation" for failure to pay rent or tax; an increasingly rigid control of movement and prohibition of movement to areas without employment; and, through the obligation on municipal authorities to make regular statistical returns on the numbers of black workers in employment in their areas, an increasingly efficient machinery of control, especially over workers seeking employment.³⁵ There were mass meetings in the Transvaal against the proposed Amendment, and at these meetings a range of issues facing blacks in the urban areas was raised.³⁶ SAW headlines give a picture of the conditions in the black areas and the grievances which they were creating: "Suffering beyond endurance" (a letter from a resident of Prospect Township);³⁷ "Insanitary conditions of Pimville Township";³⁸ "Location conditions scandal in Pretoria";³⁹ "Pick-up van plays havoc among the people";⁴⁰ "Terrible conditions in Germiston Location"; "Ferreira Tenants League struggle against High rents and Decent Housing [sic]";⁴¹ and then, in June 1937, after the Urban Areas Amendment had been passed: "Police Raids Becoming More vicious and Brutal. Native Laws Amendment Act in Action".⁴² One week later, there were "riots" in Benoni.⁴³ Location police had been conducting permit raids on Coronation Day when

"rioting" broke out. The local police were forced to call in SA Police reinforcements. Then, in Vereeniging, the anger aroused by the pick-up raids reached a new level, and two white policemen were killed.⁴⁴

There have been numerous violent conflicts with the repressive forces of the state in South African history. In some cases, such as Soweto 1976, they have been indicators of a massive resurgence of combativity within the workers' movement which has developed, for the main part, beneath the surface. At times, they have been the continuing resistance of relatively isolated groups, when the mass struggle on the issue has already been defeated. In 1937, there was violent resistance at Harding, where tax collectors were forced to retreat for fear of their lives.⁴⁵ There were also the "riots" of Vereeniging and Benoni. The Harding struggle was a remnant of the historically effectively defeated struggle of the rural masses against the imposition of taxation. The action at Vereeniging and Benoni represented something else: it was an indicator of the growing combativity which was developing, not just amongst those involved, but extending much more broadly to workers like themselves, who shared the same experience, in the major urban centres of the country.

We have seen the real problems which stood in the way of the development of the unions. It would take time for the experience of collective production in an industrial urban environment to be fully assimilated for the thousands of new industrial workers; it would take time also for the impact of the attacks and defeats to

be overcome by the experience of new organisation and collective class strength. These things meant that the process of resurgence into which more and more black workers were being drawn would not develop in a single, unobstructed series of linear steps; nor would the process be given clear and unambiguous confirmation at every point. The process was one in which the mood of workers changed - a development which is particularly difficult to measure at every stage. But the landmarks of the process, even in its initial phase, were there:- the development of two unions which had nearly collapsed; the emergence of new unions; a general growth in union membership. There were signs that industrial action was beginning to escalate again. And the underlying process of resurgence was to be reflected also in outbursts of action in the black working class communities, exemplified by the Vereeniging riot of 1937. By 1938, the process of resurgence in the workers' movement was well underway.

The threat posed by the Hertzog Bills had been discussed at different conferences of black petty bourgeois political organisations, and there were moves to establish a united opposition amongst the different leaders and organisations.⁴⁶ After fusion had been carried through, a broad conference was organised to be held in Bloemfontein in December 1935.⁴⁷ Out of this conference, the All Africa Convention was established, as a co-ordinating federation of different organisations.⁴⁸ The conference was chaired by Jabavu. In a combination of overstatement and understatement, Umteteli commented:

"Politically the African National Convention of December 1935 holds up another light and lead to the people for the coming year. The Native Bills seem to have put new life into that Convention, and to have inspired it with a determination to get them amended with a reasonable conception of equity.... We feel that the Convention will be wisely led by Professor Jabavu. He is, fortunately, no champion of violent methods."⁴⁹

Tabata, who was at the conference, describes the gathering in this way:

"The meeting was characterised by great enthusiasm and determination. Once more the mood of the people was high. A common danger had brought to their consciousness the need to unite. Under the force of events, all the petty organisational rivalries were swept aside and all the old leaders came together. Every single leader was present, and every organisation represented. With a single voice the people manifested their

determination to resist the Bills. The keynote of the conference was unity, unity of purpose and unity of struggle. Conference passed a resolution rejecting the Bills and instructed its executive to inform the Government of its decision."⁵⁰

It is true that the conference was unanimous in its opposition to the Bills. But it was not the radical rejection, on the basis of mass pressure, that Tabata suggests. The whole emphasis in the decisions of the conference was not on "unity of purpose and unity of struggle", but on consultation, delay, and further investigations. All the major resolutions are characterised by moderation: on the Franchise Bill, the Convention appealed to the Senate and called for a conference; on the Native Land and Trust Bill, the Convention welcomed the attempt of the government to deal with the issue, called for the dropping of the Bill, a Union-wide census, and the establishment of a mixed commission. The Convention criticised oppressive laws and various discriminative measures and "prayed", as "His Majesty's loyal subjects", that the government alleviate the "Black man's lot".⁵¹ On Urban Areas, the Convention stated that: "The projected amendment of the Native (Urban Areas) Act threatens to disorganise everything already initiated by urban Africans in the way of self-development." It "respectfully and yet strongly urge[d] the Government to desist from introducing further legislation that disturbs the progress already initiated by the Africans in the urban areas". Amongst the organisational measures adopted, it was urged that "shilling collections be made at homes

in all towns and villages, specially by Chiefs, from all sympathisers with the movement."⁵²

Apart from the delegation to the government, the only action that was decided upon was to have another meeting in 1936, and to call a "National Day of Humiliation" on 19 January 1936.⁵³ The delegation from the AAC saw Hertzog in Cape Town in February 1936. After the meeting, Hertzog announced that a compromise had been reached. The enfranchised Africans would be placed on a separate voters' roll and would be entitled to elect three white Members of Parliament and two white Provincial Councillors.⁵⁴ There is some dispute over whether or not the AAC delegation did agree to the compromise.⁵⁵ On balance, the evidence indicates that the compromise was seriously discussed by the delegation, and that they were willing to accept it, as the best option seriously on offer. But other members of the AAC Executive, amongst whom Xuma was notable, and white liberals in the SAIRR were opposed to acceptance of the compromise, at that stage.⁵⁶ An emergency AAC executive meeting was held in Cape Town, and opposition to the Bills reaffirmed.⁵⁷

By the time the AAC held its next meeting, in June 1936, the Hertzog Bills, with the compromise included in the Representation of Natives Act, had become law. Those assembled therefore had to decide how to respond to the framework of elections set up under that Act.⁵⁸ The divisions within the elements making up the AAC were apparent almost immediately after its establishment, in the

dispute about whether the compromise should be and had been accepted. Further divisions were to surface, as soon as the Bills became law. A motion calling for a boycott was put forward by militant delegates from the Cape,⁵⁹ but was defeated. In Jabavu's Presidential address, he had made his opposition to the boycott clear: he described the tactic of the boycott as "retaliative reprisals and bottled revenge" and made it clear that, in his judgement, a boycott would not work, would have unpredictable consequences, and would be an attempt to "win our rights by using the fear of a bloody revolution as a weapon of propaganda".⁶⁰ The main resolution expressed "profound disappointment with the Government" in its enactment of the Bills, and called for "the adoption of a policy of political identity". Such a policy would "ensure the ultimate creation of a South African society in which, while the various groups may develop on different lines socially and culturally they will be bound together by the pursuit of common political objectives". The resolution instructed the Executive to explore all avenues of action to secure the goal of common citizenship rights for all. It then declared: "Now therefore this All-African Convention solemnly resolves to pick up the gauntlet thrown before it by the White Parliament of South Africa."⁶¹

Despite the more assertive tone of the 1936 resolution, and the unanimous Executive rejection of the Hertzog compromise, the majority of those represented at the AAC turned towards participation within the electoral framework established by the Representation of Natives Act. By the time the next AAC meeting

was held, in December 1937,⁶² the NRC elections had taken place, and six members of the 1935 AAC Executive had been elected as NRC members.⁶³ Between the 1936 and 1937 meetings, the major activity of the AAC appears to have been an attempt to arrive at an agreed set of candidates for the Transvaal NRC seats, and the OFS/Transvaal Senate seat.⁶⁴

At the 1937 meeting, a constitution was adopted which laid down that meetings would be held only every three years.⁶⁵ The conference adopted policies on a wide range of issues, including trade union rights, the 8 hour day, unemployment benefits, the abolition of the pass laws, the right to strike, and the franchise for Africans.⁶⁶ As opposed to the 1935 resolutions, the language in 1937 was one of "demands", "rights", "freedom", and "agitation". Amongst all of this was included, in a section on economic policy, a series of demands which clearly expressed the capitalist aspirations of sections of the petty bourgeoisie: "the need of an education on the lines of book-keeping and business methods, thereby promoting economic uplift, initiative and efficiency"; and "urging successful business men and women to provide frequent public lectures calculated to rouse the national conscience and to stimulate African latent gifts in trading and business capacity".⁶⁷

These decisions of the AAC are an apparently strange, and potentially contradictory, mixture. They included recognition that those elected under the Hertzog Bill structures were "the

accepted mouthpiece of Africans in their various representative state chambers";⁶⁸ this is combined with an attempt to turn those representatives into delegates of the AAC. The conference placed an obligation on those elected individuals to attend AAC meetings "to discover African views and to give an account of their stewardship".⁶⁹ The Constitution laid down that all chiefs were ex officio members of the organisation's Executive.⁷⁰ Despite the conservative aspects of the 1937 decisions, the radicals within the AAC, focussing on different decisions, saw the 1937 conference as reflecting the continuing expression of the militant popular will within the AAC.

The reality was, however, that the majority of the organised petty bourgeoisie were not defeated in a political contest with the radicals. Nor were they drawn along behind the leadership of those radicals. The AAC leaders who had become committed to participation in the NRC elections had no particular need to pursue the matter through the AAC. The elected seats on the NRC were distributed provincially - and it was at that level that the potential candidate faced the most likely opposition - either in the form of opposing candidates, or by an organised radical element.

In this period, the ANC was a federation of largely autonomous provincial units;⁷¹ the provincial organisations of the ANC were far more important, in NRC electoral terms, than the irregular gathering of leaders which the AAC amounted to. As an organisation of opposition to the Hertzog Bills, the AAC had

proved to be still-born. As an organisation through which an accommodation to those Bills could be structured, it also presented problems. Firstly, the organisation had a record of opposition to the Bills, agreed at the 1935 conference, reaffirmed by the 1936 special Executive meeting, and strongly suggested by the 1936 resolution. Secondly, there was an organised radical component of the AAC which would resist any accommodation. Thirdly, the structure of the AAC was not electorally useful. As electoral machines, the local community organisations, urban advisory boards, traditional tribal structures and provincial congresses of the ANC were all far more appropriate.⁷² Not surprisingly, the majority of the AAC leadership layer simply deserted the organisation; with electoral bases in the provinces, and the NRC providing a new national forum through which they believed they could better organise their relationship to the government, the elements within the black petty bourgeoisie who had accepted the new laws politically turned their backs on the AAC.

The Seme leadership of the ANC had been characterised by retreat,⁷³ right-wing politics, divisions, and undemocratic procedures. Walshe argues that "by 1933 he had reduced the Bloemfontein Congress to a farce".⁷⁴ The threat posed by fusion and the "challenge" of the AAC promoted attempts by Seme to revive an organisation which had been merely "limp[ing] along."⁷⁵ The major element in these moves was Seme's plan for establishing a series of businesses under the ANC - the African Congress Clubs.⁷⁶ But the basis for his leadership of Congress was being eroded by events.

As we have seen, Seme's leadership had arisen out of the perceived need by a section of the black petty bourgeoisie to present themselves as moderate and responsible, and thereby avoid the attacks which they believed a Gumede leadership would have provoked. With the consolidation of fusion, and the enactment of the Hertzog Bills, that basis for Seme's leadership no longer existed.

In 1936 Calata became acting General Secretary, and was confirmed in this position by the elections of 1937. In 1937 Mahabane, who was at that time an AAC Vice-President, was elected President-General, to replace Seme.⁷⁷ The immediate importance of the ANC for the black petty bourgeoisie at this stage was as an electoral machine; that importance would extend to the way in which it connected with the NRC. The change of leadership had, in part, to do with preparing the ANC to play this new role. As far as that went, the ANC proved reasonably successful. With the exception of the Transvaal, the ANC was able to put forward a list of candidates and contribute to their success in the 1937 NRC elections.⁷⁸ This served to confirm the belief of key leaders that it was the ANC which could, on the one hand, help secure their election to positions of apparent national authority; and, on the other, leave them with the relative autonomy which they had enjoyed at a provincial level more or less intact. The experience of the 1937 elections confirmed the decision to effectively desert the AAC in favour of the ANC. The fact that the ANC (or any other organisation) was not able to secure a full success as

far as the nomination and election of candidates was concerned, became one of the pressures making for a re-organisation of the Congress. This process was most clear in the Transvaal, where the failure of the provincial Congress promoted rapid moves to revitalise it. In 1937, the Reef and Pretoria Co-ordinating Committee of leaders was formed, with the goal of resurrecting the Transvaal ANC.⁷⁹

But the movement into and within the ANC at this stage cannot be explained simply in terms of its advantages as an electoral vehicle. There were three other factors which explained the movement which was in motion; firstly, the traditional leaders of the ANC were aware of a "problem" being posed, or which was looming, out of the development of an articulate, semi-organised, relatively radicalised layer of the urban petty bourgeoisie.⁸⁰ Seme's response to this developing challenge had been to denounce radical moves as an attempt to destroy the ANC.⁸¹ Calata was to pursue a different alternative. It became a goal, from the viewpoint of Calata, to re-organise the ANC in such a way as to incorporate that potential source of opposition,⁸² secondly, the stirring and growing combativity amongst layers of the working class was filtering through and beginning to affect the political perception of elements within the petty bourgeoisie;⁸³ and thirdly, state action had removed the security buffer, which at least some elements of the black petty bourgeoisie saw in the Cape franchise - or, more particularly, in the hope that the Cape franchise provided a springboard for its extension.⁸⁴ All of these factors created pressure for a shift away from the conservatism of the

Seme leadership.

Mahabane became a stop-gap leader. He was reasonably acceptable to the emerging radicals - and certainly did not present the same clear target as Seme. He was also not regarded as a threat by the provincial leaders. Meanwhile, from the less frontline position of Secretary General, Calata set about organising the ANC along lines which would consolidate its usefulness in relation to the NRC structure,⁸⁵ without alienating "the graduates". The reconstruction of the ANC was in motion. But, through the period under discussion, its position as the leading organisation of the black petty bourgeoisie was by no means established.

Despite a major shift by the petty bourgeoisie when the Bills became law, elements within the petty bourgeoisie persisted with a radical rejection of the electoral framework which the Bills established. These people, some of whom were influenced by Trotskyism, were, and remained, the most active enthusiasts of the AAC. Tabata is particularly useful, not just as an analyst of the AAC, but because he was a participant whose ex post facto analysis reveals much of the thinking of radicals in the AAC at the time. They were responsible for the radical developments in the programme of the AAC, and for the decision to establish it as a permanent organisation. For these radicals, the AAC had represented the will of the oppressed people; it was seen as the alliance of the people into a united, radical, organic whole of opposition. Both the compromise, and the shift towards

participation meant breaking the unity which was seen as having an organisational existence in the AAC.⁸⁶ How valid is the picture portrayed by Tabata? To what extent did the AAC express the interests of "the oppressed people"? To what extent were those interests organised within the AAC? Did it represent an alliance between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class?

In its 1929 programme, the CP had expressed its commitment to promoting the leadership of the working class in an alliance with the petty bourgeoisie.⁸⁷ This was consistent with the orthodox position of Communists on the issue of class alliances. The objective basis for an alliance between the black petty bourgeoisie and the working class is twofold: black workers and the black petty bourgeoisie are both oppressed as blacks; black workers and the great majority of the black petty bourgeoisie suffer under the capitalist economy. But that objective basis for an alliance does not immediately translate into the concretisation, in the actual political process, of the type of alliance to which the CP had declared itself committed. Nor does an analytical identification of an oppression which spans different classes provide a precise understanding of the particular political relationship between them. Is there the perception of a common enemy and shared immediate goals; are workers and the petty bourgeoisie organised together; is there an organised alliance between their class organisations; is there collaboration on a shared programme, or on specific policies? Which class interests does such a programme and such policies represent? It is on the basis of answers to such questions that the relationship between the black petty bourgeoisie and black workers will be concretised in each historical period.

In the period under discussion, black workers and the great majority of the black petty bourgeoisie shared a common interest in opposing the Hertzog Bills; they faced attacks from a common enemy. Apart from the general underlying factors which create the

basis for a class alliance, these were immediate political factors which concretely expressed that potential. Behind those immediate common objectives, however, were a set of experiences and interests which did not automatically pull the two different classes together. Those differences were to mean that the common immediate interests of the two classes emerged, not out of a complete unity of identical interests, but out of a co-incidence of different class interests.

The Hertzog Bills raised three major issues - the franchise, the land, and the associated issue of the pass laws.⁸⁸ On the issue of the land, Mokgatle provides us with an insight into the thinking of workers in the towns for the first time. Describing a society which he had set up with some friends he wrote: "Our sole aim was to raise money to buy plots of land and eventually build on the properties which could bring us enough income to become rich men."⁸⁹ The story of the failure of that society and the completely unrealisable nature of the dream was the story of many blacks who were moving to work in the towns for the first time. For the blacks still on the land, the dream must have been a little more basic, but was equally unrealisable. The dominance of capitalist relations had meant that more and more blacks were unable even to maintain a subsistence living on the land. They were forced to become wage labourers for at least part of the year.⁹⁰ And ineluctably, the movement of blacks from peasant farming into capitalist agriculture, and into the towns in search of work and wages continued. In 1932, a government commission had pointed to

the position of labour tenants:

"[A] very important factor is the small proportion of the farm wage which is paid in cash. Generally the amount is not enough for the cash requirements of the labour tenant, and he must necessarily increase it by going to work elsewhere."⁹¹

The commission had also identified the massive movement to the towns: "One of the outstanding migrational movements in the Union is the movement of the young Natives to towns."⁹² Under capitalist relations that process was irreversible. For growing numbers of blacks in rural areas the underlying issue was not ownership, or even access to enough land. It was from an income, from the sale of labour power, that the means of social reproduction of these people was achieved.⁹³ That meant that they were being caught up in a process of proletarianisation. For the workers living, working, or depending on the income derived from the sale of labour power in the capitalist farming sector, the underlying issue was even more clearly that of an adequate income. But, for a minority of black landowners, ownership of the land was not a direct means of keeping alive but, rather, a means of making a profit. Land was, in other words, a capital asset. Access to more land was posed for them in terms of the possibility of acquiring more capital. That is why some of them were willing to welcome the approach of the Native Lands Trust,⁹⁴ which formalised the legal situation regarding purchase of land; and some of them were willing to seriously entertain the notion of segregation - which would open the door to ownership of more land, without "white" competition.⁹⁵

For the urban petty bourgeoisie the importance of the land issue was different. The issue of the land was not posed in terms of capital, or potential capital - but in terms of rights and security. Concretely, this meant that the land issue was translated into the demand for the right to urban freehold.⁹⁶ The Trust and Lands Act raised the issue, to the extent that it opened up the general question of the rights of black ownership. In addition, for the urban petty bourgeoisie, there was an importance in the land question in the sense that attacks against any section of the petty bourgeoisie brought forward the possibility of further attacks against them.

The Hertzog Bills raised the issue of the pass laws - not directly through their content, but through the related issues of movement to the towns, and the rights of residence in the towns. They also represented the determination of the government - reflected soon in the 1937 Native Laws Amendment Act - to modernise the pass laws and tighten up control in the growing population concentrations in the urban areas generally. Of those blacks who were exempt, the great majority would come from the petty bourgeoisie.⁹⁷ The way in which pass law raids were conducted - at centres like railway stations, where workers were likely to congregate, also made it likely that the impact of the pass laws was greatest for black workers.⁹⁸

Umsebenzi posed the reasons for a common defence of the

franchise:

"It may be true that the present Cape native franchise is of little use to the Natives of the Union. But it follows from this not that we should willingly surrender this franchise, but that we should fight resolutely to extend it, to make it a universal franchise for all the Natives in the Union, that we should fight for a common voters roll of black and white all over the Union."⁹⁹

In the concrete situation, defence of the existing franchise was inevitably remote from workers who had no direct link with that franchise. Only the demand for a universal franchise could have definitively changed that situation. That was the demand which would have reflected the interests of both the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. But, in the face of the attack of the Hertzog Bills, the petty bourgeoisie focussed on the defence of its franchise as it existed.¹⁰⁰

On each of these issues, the objective potential for shared demands between the black workers and the great majority of the black petty bourgeoisie existed: the abolition of all pass laws; the abolition of all segregation measures; the universal franchise. The first two of these demands had been repeatedly made by organisations of the black petty bourgeoisie¹⁰¹ although, in making the demands, there was the basis for a division between the voteless urban petty bourgeoisie and the enfranchised rural landowners. But in the face of the attacks coming from the state, the majority leadership of the organised petty bourgeoisie clearly believed that this was the time for a retreat, with as much salvaged as possible, rather than the time for a concerted

stand of resistance; nor could such a stance have been effectively taken without acceptance of the demand for the universal franchise.

It was in the area of actual resistance that the lines pursued by the petty bourgeoisie and the working class were to diverge most sharply. The opposition of the organised petty bourgeoisie had generally focussed away from the point where the law would most directly affect the mass of workers - at its point of application. Instead, the focus had tended to be on the visible point of decision-making - parliament. This was the point at which the black petty bourgeoisie identified its allies within the state - the point of apparent decision-making at which "it was not without friends". Once the decision was taken at that level, the declared opposition from the black petty bourgeoisie began to crumble. The leadership of the black petty bourgeoisie could survive under the law as it was, and it was therefore able to accept the law because it was the law.¹⁰²

Insofar, however, as the Hertzog Bills were immediately relevant to the mass of workers, this was not primarily as a decision in Parliament, or through the removal of a franchise they had never had. The central issue was the threat of the imposition of streamlined pass laws, and the intention to harden the implementation of the pass laws which the Bills represented. This was a period in which the resistance by workers to the pass laws was being reflected in the growing anger directed at the pick-up.¹⁰³

The growing anger and rising combativity inside the working class created the basis for a mass movement of opposition directed at the Hertzog Bills and the range of issues which workers were facing. The fact that the petty bourgeoisie was under attack promoted the possibilities of an alliance between the two classes. But these factors did not, in themselves, ensure that the interests of the working class would be fully represented in such an alliance, or that the alliance would be under the leadership of the working class. What role did the CP play in this situation?

A combination of state attacks and the policies adopted by the Party meant that it had moved into the period under discussion as a weakened, disoriented and divided force.¹⁰⁴ The divisions in the CP, reflected in the opposing approaches put forward by Bach and Kotane, were further revealed in a debate which developed in *Umsebenzi* from the beginning of 1935,¹⁰⁵ while both Bach and Kotane were in the Soviet Union. The debate focussed on the existence or otherwise of a black bourgeoisie, and returned to the unresolved issue of the meaning of the Native Republic slogan.¹⁰⁶ Behind the debate was the question of the approach which the Party took to non-working class blacks generally. Kotane's letter, although breaking with some of the abstractions of the third period, had provided no developed clarity on the issue. The implications of his letter were that the way forward was based on the "national consciousness" of the "native people". While Bach and Kotane were in the Soviet Union, the third period position was put in the debate by Marks¹⁰⁷ and Mofutsanyana.¹⁰⁸ Roux¹⁰⁹ and Coka¹¹⁰ argued against it. While this debate was proceeding, there was a major change of policy within the Comintern. That change overtook the debate inside the CPSA - with the result that the break from the politics of the third period became the product of a Comintern decision,¹¹¹ before the issues posed by Kotane, and in the *Umsebenzi* debate were resolved by the CPSA.

The struggle against fascism was, according to the Comintern, now to be pursued through the quest by the working class and Communist Parties for alliances with "progressive forces."¹¹² In the event, almost any force which was willing to oppose war (until

the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941), or collaborate in a military alliance against Hitler (after the invasion), came to be regarded as such a progressive ally. The Peoples Front policy of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern represented a major break from the sectarianism of the third period, and appeared to confirm the policy approach being taken by the Kotane opposition within the CPSA. With striking similarities to the way in which the Native Republic programme came to be adopted, the change of policy in the Comintern co-incided with pressures for a change inside the SA Party. The Party was able to make a break with the politics of the third period, but was freed from the pressure of reaching theoretical clarity on the issues which had been posed before it, and was able instead to turn to the new Comintern policy. As was the case with the united front approach in 1923/1924, and the adoption of the Native Republic programme, the Comintern policy provided a theorisation of the political shift.

The doubts about a sectarian position in relation to the oppressed black petty bourgeoisie, and the response to the radicalisation amongst elements within that petty bourgeoisie were now given theoretical expression in terms of the Peoples Front policy. The change in policy and activity which was set in motion did not represent a change in the Party's theoretical method, but the fact that that method was being employed in changed political circumstances. With these changes was to develop the quest, not just for an alliance between the working class and the black petty bourgeoisie, but for an alliance with

"progressive sections of capital" as well.

In September 1935, Umsebenzi clearly stated the break with the politics of the third period. The article pointed to the sectarianism within the broader international Communist movement, and continued:

"In South Africa, too, for we are not exceptional, the Party has suffered from the left sectarian tendencies, tending to isolate the Party from the toiling masses. It is our immediate task, on the lines laid down by the Seventh Congress, to set about liquidating these left sectarian tendencies, which still persist in the Party and which cause a faulty approach to the masses of workers and toilers, and in particular to the forming of a broad peoples' united front against imperialism, fascism and war."¹¹³

The new policies of the CP would, it was hoped, carry it forward out of the sectarianism and isolation of the third period. The Party and its supporters turned resolutely to the task of building Peoples Front alliances. It was a task which seemed clear-cut, after the policies of the third period. But it immediately brought significant political problems. Who were the allies in the Peoples Front to be? In Soviet foreign policy terms, the allies were "progressives" and "democrats" who would oppose war in general. This approach led the Soviet Union into a persistent misconceived effort to forge an alliance with the bourgeois democracies as the political means of fighting fascism.¹¹⁴ In each national situation, it meant the alliance with any forces which would declare themselves against fascism and war. The

theoretical method of the South African Party, reinforced by the Comintern policies, led it in the direction of two major potential allies. These were the forces which were most visible, best organised and regarded as most likely to join in such an alliance - the black petty bourgeoisie and the white unions. In December 1935 two conferences were held which the Party welcomed as laying the basis for the Peoples Front - the Johannesburg Conference of the League against Fascism and War,¹¹⁵ and the Bloemfontein Conference of the AAC.¹¹⁶

The Party was initially muted in its enthusiasm for the AAC, arguing that "nothing very effective has been decided to put up a struggle against these [Hertzog] Bills becoming law".¹¹⁷ But, in the spirit of the new quest for allies, Umsebenzi soon made it clear that the CP regarded the AAC as the primary organisation of the "African people". When Seme voiced his opposition to the possibility of the AAC becoming a permanent organisation, Umsebenzi replied:¹¹⁸

"Surely it must be obvious to any sensible person that the broad representative character of the AAC is by far a more competent body to decide what steps to take further for the rights of the African people than the 'ANC'"; "...all the worth and help the ANC is to the Native people in their plight is like a fountain in comparison to the sea."¹¹⁹

If the AAC was the organisation which best fitted the Peoples Front approach, how was the CP to pursue its relationship with

that organisation? Proposals are put forward to strengthen the AAC - the affiliation of trade unions and the establishment of local branches. The Party warns against the AAC becoming "a Parliament of the Bantu people, with annual conferences, to discuss abstract sentimental questions of no importance".¹²⁰ But CP members, in participating in the deliberations of the first AAC meeting, agree to all its proposals, and in fact put forward a resolution which is not distinguishable in tone or demands from any other proposed by the petty bourgeoisie.¹²¹ The Party enthusiastically welcomed the Day of Humiliation. In its pre-publicity, there is no indication of any plan of how the Day of Humiliation is to be used.¹²² On what the Party calls "this all-important question"¹²³ of whether to boycott the NRC elections, no policy is put forward. Repeatedly, articles in *Umsebenzi* raise the importance of the issue¹²⁴ and it is clearly stated that "the CP must give a lead to the toiling masses of South Africa" on the question.¹²⁵ But at no stage was this lead forthcoming.¹²⁶ It was after the attitude of the majority within the AAC had been made clear, that the CP shifted into line behind them and adopted a public position of opposition to the boycott.

A combination of the method of the Party and the policies of the Comintern created the pressure for the Party to follow, rather than attempt to lead, potential allies. The empiricist method directed towards surface appearances. And at that level, the petty bourgeoisie appeared to be the main political actor, and appeared to be moving in a progressive direction. The CP was ready to follow those moves. When these meant that

organisationally the petty bourgeoisie deserted the AAC and turned to the ANC, the CP followed again. For two years, when that shift was not yet absolutely clear, the CP publicly favoured the AAC.¹²⁷ Only when the moves to revitalise the ANC were clearly under way did the Party follow, with members becoming centrally involved in the formation of the Reef and Pretoria Co-ordinating Committee.¹²⁸ As far as Comintern policy was concerned, that established the Peoples Front as the absolute priority of the Party. This came to mean, in effect, a policy of no public criticism of potential allies.¹²⁹ One of the consequences of this was that, on major political questions, the CP placed itself in a position where it was more likely to follow the lead of potential allies, than to put forward a lead of its own.

The second potential ally to which the Party was directed was the unions of the white workers. The Party promoted two front organisations - the Friends of the Soviet Union and the League against Fascism and War.¹³⁰ In neither of these cases was the Party able to secure the affiliation of its real target - the TLC. But, for a part of the period under discussion, the Party could see some success. At the 1935 TLC conference, a motion was adopted instructing the NEC "to bring into existence a Workers and Peoples' Front to fight on the economic and political fields for the democratic rights of all people".¹³¹ In October 1936, the TLC convened a conference which set up the Peoples Front Movement.¹³² Andrews was in the chair and the organising committee included a significant minority of Communists and supporters.¹³³ At the

conference, an attempt by Communists to have demands relating to black workers discussed was defeated.¹³⁴ In the 1937 elections for the TLC Executive Wolfson, Andrews, Johanna Cornelius, Tyler, Kalk, Weinberg, Weinbren and Sachs were all elected.¹³⁵

Umsebenzi of 25 January 1936 reports the victory of Emmerich, a Communist, over Stuart, leader of the Cape Federation, in the elections for Secretary of the Tramwaymens Union. (The election result was soon after reversed on a technicality.) Stuart, the leader of the Cape Federation, was described as "the most reactionary and most dangerous trade union functionary in SA" and "the chief cause of the most backward state of affairs prevailing there, the weakest organisation of workers, and, on the whole, the worst conditions of labour...."¹³⁶ As unity moves between the Cape Federation and the TLC develop,¹³⁷ the Party press reports drop the categorisation, or any criticism of Stuart.

In April 1937, there was a strike at the Simmer and Jack Mine against the refusal of a member of the Mynwerkersbond to pay union dues. The strike, which was almost 100% supported, was seen by the Party as a great blow against the Nationalists.¹³⁸ As a result of the strike, a closed shop agreement was reached with the Chamber. The employers agreed to deal only with already recognised unions.¹³⁹ But the deal also included an effective no-strike agreement.¹⁴⁰ In its enthusiastic support for what was seen as a blow against Nationalism, the Party did not take up the potential damage of the no-strike aspect of the agreement.¹⁴¹

In relation to the LP, the CP adopted a position which was far more conciliatory than any previous position, including the CP support for the Pact.¹⁴² The major criticism was directed at the failure of the LP to join the Peoples Front Movement.¹⁴³ In the Transvaal Provincial election campaign the Party declared that "apart from the foregoing [the red-herring of segregation] we believe that the LP is sincere in its endeavours [sic] to improve the lot of the poor people."¹⁴⁴ In the 1937 Johannesburg municipal elections, the Party wrote to the LP, proposing an electoral agreement (on a programme which included the demand for a differential minimum wage for black and white municipal workers).¹⁴⁵ Despite the overtures, the LP retained its traditional positions and refused any collaboration with the CP, or the political ventures of the TLC in which the Party had significant influence. Despite this single setback, the successes served to confirm the primary orientation to the white workers, for some individuals within the Party.

But the orientation which the Party was adopting created difficulties in any attempt to win the support of Afrikaans workers.¹⁴⁶ The quest was for organised allies and, especially for those members and supporters of the Party in leading positions within the TLC, the support of the organised union movement was a priority, ahead of any attempts to win the support of rank and file Afrikaans workers. The dropping of criticism of the LP, and the uncritical acclamation for the Simmer and Jack settlement opened up the CP to the criticism from Nationalist agitators

that it was ready to sacrifice the Afrikaans workers in favour of the union and political leaders who adopted racist attitudes towards them - and also in favour of the blacks.

The single significant trade union success for Afrikaner Nationalists in this period was on the Railways, which was one of the main centres of employment for Afrikaans workers.¹⁴⁷ The Spoorbond was formed in 1934, and recognised by management in 1942. It was largely made up of the lowest paid unskilled workers.¹⁴⁸ In the mid-30's, it claimed 16,000 members.¹⁴⁹ Initially, it had been amongst white collar workers that there was support for Afrikaner nationalism.¹⁵⁰ From within this layer there was pressure for a turn to the mass of railway workers, not because they were part of the volk, but because they could provide a mass base which would strengthen the white collar workers. The eight craft unions on the Railways, however, combined in opposition to the Spoorbond, ensuring that even with its widespread support amongst a layer of workers, it would always face a hostile majority within the union movement.¹⁵¹ In this, the craft unions could naturally rely on the support of the employers, for whom divisions amongst the unions seemed only to be of benefit. Despite these obstacles, the Spoorbond was successful, both in developing an industrial working class base for the Afrikaner Nationalists, and in achieving the retreat and collapse of NURAHS, under Nationalist pressure.¹⁵² However, the failure of the attempts by the Nationalists to undermine the position of Sachs amongst the Afrikaans women in the clothing industry was

demonstrated at a debate between Sachs and Grobelaar, of the Nationalist Hervormingsorganisasie. At a meeting of 3,000 only 20 people voted against Sachs.¹⁵³

In 1936, the 6th National Conference of the CPSA confirmed the dual orientation of the Party. The conference resolved that the main methods of Party work were the national liberation of the Natives through the AAC, and political and economic struggle in the trade unions.¹⁵⁴ For many Party members, and in much Party propaganda, there was no particular orientation to black workers. Insofar as work amongst organised blacks was concerned, the priority was the AAC (and then the ANC) ahead of the black unions.¹⁵⁵ There is no evidence that the CP pursued its earlier call for the affiliation of unions to the AAC, and the establishment of local AAC branches. The "political and economic struggle in the unions" referred primarily to the TLC unions - in which individual CP members held several leadership positions.¹⁵⁶ At times, as had been the case in the past, the orientation to white workers reflected a continuation of aspects of the white labour tradition. In 'Communism and the Native Question', a pamphlet produced by the Johannesburg District of the Party in this period, this was carried into a crude racism. In the pamphlet, there is an attempt to appeal to white workers by criticising the civilised labour policy for not securing their interests. But the basis of the criticism is that the policy has failed because it has not stopped blacks from having "far more than their share in the number of jobs".¹⁵⁷ In passages which are not dissimilar to Nationalist propaganda, the document considers how best to avoid

racial mixing. Notwithstanding the consistent anti-racist commitment of the Party, the document reflects a minority tendency within the Party to seek to combat the growing influence of Nationalists amongst white workers by adapting to racism, in effect using some of the racist arguments of the Nationalists.

In 1937, the ANC was beginning to replace the AAC as the organisational focus as far as blacks were concerned, but the dual orientation continued. By the time of the 1937 conference, the work of the Party had promoted the formation of the Peoples Front Movement, and individual Party members were increasingly located within the ANC.¹⁵⁸ The conference heard from Mofutsanyana that "conditions had never been so favourable as they then were for a revolutionary movement".¹⁵⁹ Within a year, that optimism had given way to the "crisis conference" of 1938.¹⁶⁰

There were developments in 1938 which could have promoted the change in the Party assessment. In that year, the TLC, fearing the pressure of Nationalists, retreated, and withdrew support from the Peoples Front Movement. In its place, the Council for the Maintenance of Democracy was set up, with the CP being specifically barred from affiliation.¹⁶¹ In the Transvaal, a major focus of the Party had been the NRC elections. When these were over, the Party was faced with the need to develop a new immediate focus. The LP had clearly rejected the overtures from the CP. And, as far as the black unions were concerned, the failure of a "unity" meeting in 1938 had left the Party in a

position where the unions which it influenced had far fewer members than a rival, Trotskyist-influenced organisation.¹⁶² But 1938 brought successes, as far as the quest for allies was concerned. In April, a Non-European Unity conference was held, and the Non-European United Front was set up¹⁶³ - an organisation in which Communists had strong influence from the very outset.¹⁶⁴

It was not, then, simply the experience of failure which promoted the crisis of 1938. Rather, the clear setbacks which elements within the Party had received brought to the fore a confusion of orientation, method and policy which had been embedded in the Party through the whole period. The renewed Native Republic debate in 1935 clearly reveals that confusion. As the participants in the Party debate revealed, the problem was not simply the meaning of the Native Republic slogan, but the political confusion of the Party membership. In April 1935, Roux wrote: "Even today I doubt whether the average rank and filer in the Party has a clear picture of the Native Republic."¹⁶⁵ In the next edition of *Umsebenzi*, A Z replied:

"If Comrade Roux will say that an independent Native Republic is a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government, and I say that it is a workers' and peasants' government, what will the average rank and filer who Cde Roux speaks of, understand?

"I say there are Native exploiters, he says there are only elements of exploitation in South Africa. Why not discuss such questions in any form he likes within the Party until we come to an understanding? I maintain that speaking of clarity of the

average members of the party, when the leading party members are not in agreement is nonsense. It is only when the leading members of the party arrive at an understanding that we should not only go to the rank and file members of our party and explain to them, but Umsebenzi will give them a line and not two opinions, to confuse them."¹⁶⁶

Confusion was also revealed on the central orientation of the period - the Peoples Front. The Party looked for, but could not find, the "progressive elements of the bourgeoisie" to which the Peoples Front policy directed it:

"As to the 'peoples front', it is evedent [sic] that the difficulties of having such a front of Whites and Natives together are at present insurmountable because there is no economic base for the rapprochement [sic] of the White bourgeois elements that go to make up such a wider front with the Natives for the moment. Besides the Natives who are already subject to impirialist [sic] dictatorship fascist in charatar [sic] can not be called upon to defend democratic rights which they have not got."¹⁶⁷

Given the dual orientations - to the black petty bourgeoisie and the white unions - were there to be two fronts, or one? Reporting on a CP meeting to discuss the Party programme, **SAW** writes:

"Comrade Mofutsanyana demonstrated clearley [sic] that the Peoples Front could not be two separate fronts for the European on the one hand and the Native on the other, for both black and white have the [sic] common enemy, the Government and the

employers."¹⁶⁸

Immediately after this, the Party proceeded to participate in the establishment of the "all-white Peoples Front Movement" which was hailed as a major step forward.¹⁶⁹ And the debate clearly continued: "There can be no talk of two fronts if the struggle has to be between the oppressors and the oppressed. The parallel lines of the working class in this country are not fronts, but two sections of one front, working on the conditions and peculiarities of SA as we find them. If proper educational bases are laid these two parallel lines will converge as one mighty army against the common enemy of all the imperialist exploiters...."¹⁷⁰

The *Guardian*, referring to moves towards the establishment of the NEUF writes:

"[O]ut of experience a non-European front is being forged. It would be disastrous, however, if the movement was to take on a general anti-white character. Its success depends in the long run upon the degree of unity that can be achieved with the white worker, whose interests are broadly the same as those of the non-European."¹⁷¹

Apart from an abstract theoretical sense, if there was meant to be one front, how could the educational bases be laid, and the bridge between the "two sections" be built?¹⁷² The reality was that no serious attempt could be made to integrate the two different formations without serious criticisms which, while necessary for political clarity, might alienate the potential ally. The racism

of the white union leaders, as well as their political conservatism, had to be addressed if a single mass front was a serious goal; similarly, as regards the depth of support for British imperialism amongst elements of the organised petty bourgeoisie; and the fact that the interests and demands of the black petty bourgeoisie and black workers were overlapping, but not identical. Without these issues being taken up seriously, there was no possibility of a single Peoples Front, even on the terms conceived by the Party. But the politics of alliance before political leadership meant that such criticism could not be raised. Nor could political criticism from the CP alone bridge the gap between the two fronts which were developing.

There was only one bridge which could seriously have achieved the task - the movement of black workers. It was only where the strength of black workers was clear that both the white workers and the black petty bourgeoisie could have been drawn towards the black workers and, in that way, towards a broader alliance. But, in the period under discussion, the resurgence of the workers' movement was still in its initial phase. Black workers were not powerfully organised; nor were they taking action in a way which clearly showed their strength. The CP itself was focussing on other social groups, before the mass of the working class. The only possible way of pursuing that politics meant that the alliances with the black petty bourgeoisie and the white workers had to be pursued separately. And that is what had been happening. The very fact that it was happening created confusion in the Party. If that was the situation, surely it had to be

explained - and justified. A debate on these issues developed inside the Party. That such a debate should be conducted publicly from time to time suggests that uncertainty reached deep into the Party. The question began to be posed as to whether the Party should not be divided formally, in accordance with the way in which it was becoming divided actually. And, connected with that question, confusion began to develop about the very existence of the Party. If Fronts were the main weapon of the working class - and if the policy of those fronts had to be pursued and could not be openly criticised, then what role could the Party play in relation to the Fronts?

All of these confusions were contained within the Party from the beginning of the Peoples Front turn.¹⁷³ And, through the whole period, remnants of the internal regime established in the third period persisted. SAW revealed a part of the situation which had developed:

"The growth of the membership of the CPSA Johannesburg District, compared with the activities of the members themselves reveal a serious and criminal neglect of their individual duties in the party. Every week, we have new members filling in forms for membership, especially Natives. The groups function, but in most of them the attendance is very poor. Not every member is active. The majority are do-nothing spectators.... One of the reasons for such political irresponsibility in the Party is the political low level of our members."¹⁷⁴

The orientation, method and policies of the Party led it into the

situation described in SAW. The result of these was the crisis conference, at which it was seriously proposed that the Party should formally split into racial wings.¹⁷⁵ That proposal was rejected. In its place, as the only solution which was agreed, the headquarters of the Party was moved to Cape Town.¹⁷⁶ In that geographic move was a political shift which was to develop over time.

The NEUF had been established in Cape Town, and the local branch of the CP was centrally involved in its formation, development and leadership. Although unions attended the founding conference, and individual unionists became leading figures in the NEUF,¹⁷⁷ it was predominantly an organisation of the black petty bourgeoisie, drawing together "Coloureds" and Africans in particular. The CP involvement in the NEUF represented, in part, a continuation, in different circumstances, of the orientation to the black petty bourgeoisie which had been pursued in the Transvaal. There were two important differences in the Cape: the struggle against segregation measures was still being pursued - and was to escalate sharply in 1939;¹⁷⁸ and the majority of unions in the Cape were affiliated to the Federation in which the CP was far less firmly located than was the case with the TLC.¹⁷⁹

In the meantime, the Party continued with its quest for allies after the emergency conference, focussing on the ANC, the NEUF, and the TLC. The move to Cape Town may have resolved problems of spirit in the leadership.¹⁸⁰ But it did not clarify the political confusion which had, in part, promoted those problems. It was a

change in political circumstances in the opposition movement generally, rather than a change of political method and orientation, which brought the CP out of the crisis of 1938. The Party had changed its politics from those of the third period. It had done so, however, without the method of the Party, its theoretical empiricism and abstraction, being consciously challenged. As we have seen, the fact that there were "mistakes" in the third period had been acknowledged by the Party.¹⁸¹ But there was no serious attempt to analyse and account for those mistakes. The "mistakes" of the third period are criticised, while the validity of the policies which actually produced the "mistakes" is asserted:

"The Seventh World Congress made a serious change in the line of the Communist International and its constituent parties. This change in no way implies that the previous decisions were incorrect. On the contrary, the decisions of the Communist International are made in accordance with the conditions obtaining at the time. The fact that serious mistakes were made in the application of the correct line ... does not justify the opposition of some comrades. The purging of the party of opposition tendencies is the necessary prerequisite for the successful struggle against fascism.

"The mistakes of the CPSA consist in indulging in academic discussions regarding the slogan, instead of carrying on consistent [sic] mass work, resulting in a faction struggle within the party and in partial isolation from the masses."¹⁸²

More recently, Party historians have acknowledged the confusion and disorientation in the period under discussion.¹⁸³ But in this case, again, there is no serious analysis. Simons attributes the problem to Hardy, the Comintern representative, and his reformist ideas - without any explanation of how a Comintern representative could have such ideas, or of why the CPSA accepted them.¹⁸⁴

On one issue, where the Party clearly took a different line to the Soviet leadership, an assessment of the difference is effectively sidestepped. The invasion of Ethiopia by the Italians had an enormous impact in South Africa.¹⁸⁵ As Hemson points out: "When the Communist Party initiated a campaign in support of Ethiopian resistance to Italian imperialism in August 1935, the dock workers were enthusiastic supporters of the mass meetings, and refused to load Italian ships with provisions."¹⁸⁶ The CP called for the League of Nations to impose sanctions, focussing in particular on the supply of petrol to Mussolini. Umsebenzi asked:

"[W]here is the League [of Nations] and what is its attitude in this hour when Fascist Italy is invading Abyssinia? The League is definitely dominated by Britain and France and these two powers dictate its policy."¹⁸⁷ But in this period, the priority of the Soviet leadership, was not the defence of Ethiopia against imperialism, but the pursuit of an international Peoples Front against Germany. In order not to "alienate" any potential allies in the League of Nations, the Soviet Union was willing to follow the path of the League. In the same period, Stalin signed a

treaty with Laval.¹⁸⁸ This further strengthened the Soviet determination to accept the League of Nations "solution". Manuilsky, the leader of the Comintern explained the Soviet position in this way:

" [H]ere....is another example which shows that the party in power occupies a special position; and failure to understand this may lead to a host of mistakes being committed when working out the tactical line.

"I refer to the slogan of boycotting Italy in connection with the Italo-Abyssinian conflict. The Second and Amsterdam Internationals are calling upon the League of Nations to apply sanctions.... Suppose however that the bourgeois states will not apply these sanctions, and that the USSR will be the only state which does, ... who will gain by this? The capitalist states which will maintain relations with Italy. Who will lose by it? Not Italy but the USSR. Actually the boycott will hit, not fascist Italy, but the socialist Land of the Soviets."¹⁸⁹

The CPSA had made the supposition which Manuilsky called for:

"The workers in all four corners of the earth are realising that in order that the colonial adventure of Italian Fascism be stopped ... in order that the world peace be maintained ..., it is not enough to rely on the League of Nations to apply sanctions, for the workers know how little one can rely on imperialist governments to apply such sanctions effectively."¹⁹⁰

But the solution which the Party put forward was the continued call for such sanctions, and working class blacking action:

"Although we know that the effective application of sanctions is necessary and we therefore urge such application, the Communist Party knows that working class action is the strongest and most reliable weapon."¹⁹¹

The result was a situation in which the CPSA called for and organised blacking, while the Soviet Union, amongst other countries, continued to supply Italy with oil.

In a politically fluid and dynamic situation, the effectiveness of the CP's political activities was undermined by the confusion and disorientation which its policies and method had created. It had tried to respond to the growing political volatility amongst Afrikaans workers by the publication of *Die Aarbeider en Arme Boer* in 1935.¹⁹² But the priority of the time was organised alliances - and the Party's orientation was therefore directed primarily at the "traditional" organisations of the white workers. Amidst all the other political pressures operating in the situation, its propaganda aimed at Afrikaans workers was undermined by its overt attempt to conciliate the leaders of the organisations which neglected the needs of those workers; instances of adapting to racism simply repeated the arguments being put forward more consistently by Nationalist agitators.

In the case of the black petty bourgeoisie, the CP could do little more than tail that ally - able to do so effectively only when the movement of the ally was absolutely clear. In the case of the black workers, the CP became involved in the development of the unions. Ray Alexander, H A Naidoo¹⁹³ and Gomas¹⁹⁴ were amongst the leading Communists who played a central role in the development of the unions. But here too, the political problems which Party policies had created came to the fore. Out of the collapse of NURAHS, the Coloured and Indian workers who had been members formed a new union - the South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU).¹⁹⁵ Ray Alexander, at that time a full-time unpaid Party worker became centrally involved in the development of that new union, and played a leading role in the

development of other unions in the Cape. But the overall policies of the CP created three immediate problems: how could the development of these unions promote the alliance with the TLC leaders? Would the demands made for blacks be the same as those made for whites? And would the Peoples Front approach extend to unions in which Trotskyists were in leading positions? The first problem was dealt with by a consistent attempt, in the case of all unions, including those in the Transvaal, to get them to affiliate to the TLC.¹⁹⁶ The second was answered by the spread, into the union sphere, of the dual alliances practice which the CP was pursuing generally.

At the 1937 TLC conference the Leather Workers' Union, under the leadership of the CP member Kalk, proposed a racially determined differential minimum wage of 10/- per day for white workers and 5/- per day for blacks.¹⁹⁷ At the conference, an amendment was proposed by the African Iron and Steel Workers Union to increase the "Native" minimum to 7/6 per day. The amendment was accepted by Kalk, but rejected by the conference.¹⁹⁸ In its 1938 manifesto, the CP carried the demand for the differential wage agreed by the TLC conference.¹⁹⁹

At the same time as it was putting forward this racially based demand, the CP strongly opposed the participation of white secretaries of black unions in attempts to build a single federation of black unions. In the discussion above, we have seen a more or less parallel development between the unions which came

together under the Joint Committee, and those which formed the Co-ordinating Committee. So far, that dual development has been identified as an indicator of the resurgence which was developing. The growth of the unions has been explained as the result of the growing receptivity to unionism amongst some workers, and the efforts to tap and develop that receptivity. The very fact that these developments were taking place in the same period inevitably opened up the question of unity between the different unions. A meeting to discuss the issue was held in November 1938.²⁰⁰ The meeting opened up the possibility of a qualitative strengthening of the black unions through the establishment of a single, authoritative trade union centre. Given the political fluidity within the petty bourgeoisie, and the rising combativity of the great mass of unorganised workers, such an authoritative centre could have played a significant political role. Above all else, it would have strengthened the framework of independent class organisation - extending that option to workers whose rising combativity was making them more and more receptive to organisation. But the unity meeting was a complete failure.

The breakdown of unity moves is attributed, by Party analysts, to the question of the race of union leaders.²⁰¹ Makabeni argued - with the strong support of Communists- that whites should not be allowed to be general secretaries - although they could be members of union executives.²⁰² These conditions conform to the situation prevailing in the Co-ordinating Committee unions, and are at odds with that in the Joint Committee Unions. The CP has

explained the position it pursued at the unity meeting in terms of the need for black unions to be allowed to develop under black control. Later, at the time of a division inside CNETU, the CP was to spell out clearly an approach which throws its explanations of the breakdown of the November meeting into question. A resolution to the 1945 Party conference, calling for the establishment of a National Council of Non-European Trade Unions was defeated.²⁰³ The argument - which cut across the rigid position on black leadership - was that black unions should only be organised separately where affiliation to the TLC was not possible.²⁰⁴

The more likely explanation is that the CP was pursuing their declared policy in relation to Trotskyists in the union movement, and were prepared to obstruct the possibilities of union unity to do so.²⁰⁵ Certainly the attitude which the Party demonstrates, as well as its declared position, suggest that the unions under Trotskyists were not part of the "labour movement". In Wolfson's trade union report to the Party conference in 1936, there is no mention of the Laundry Workers Union.²⁰⁶ In March 1937, the Union of Laundry, Cleaning and Drycleaning Workers was formed in Cape Town at a meeting attended by La Guma, Gomas and Weinberg.²⁰⁷ The SAW report does not mention the existence of the Transvaal union - at a time when the CP is actively promoting unity between the Cape Federation and the TLC. The attitude taken at the November meeting was in sharp contrast to the conciliatory approach which was taken in order to promote unity between the Cape Federation

and the TLC.²⁰⁸ In the Guardian of 12 August 1938, the Co-ordinating Committee is described as "representative of practically all Native trade unions." Hirson points out that Gordon "was reviled by his political opponents in the CPSA, and a paper such as *Chain Breaker* gave publicity almost exclusively to the unions built by Gana Makabeni".²⁰⁹

Responding to the Vereeniging "riots", the CP had written:

"The Vereeniging affair ... reveals the fact that the African masses can not yet understand that the fight against the instruments of the lawmaker must be made into an organised fight, as the only means of fighting the real oppressors.... They can not understand it because they have no lead.... The spontaneous protest in Vereeniging, the Harding affair where tax collectors were forced to retreat, the ever increasing spontaneous strikes for higher wages - they are signals to the African leaders. They indicate that the masses are becoming more and more ready to fight against their persecution, but the African leaders are lagging behind the masses."²¹⁰

The CP characterisation of the position of the African leaders is borne out by developments within the organisations of the petty bourgeoisie. The dynamics of capitalist development, and the immediate historical experience of state attacks and defeats against the workers' movement had placed real obstacles to the growth of unionism and militant working class action. The working class had to contend with such obstacles; the failures of the "African leaders" did, as the CP suggested, constitute a problem.

But the rising spontaneous combativity, which the CP identifies, was not simply a problem for the resurgent workers' movement. It was in fact the driving force of that resurgence. It was that rising spontaneous combativity which, even if it had led to isolated defeats in the early phase of the resurgence, was to be at the root of the massive growth of class organisation and action which developed in a later stage. The immediate internal problem which obstructed the resurgence of the workers' movement was that of divisions between union leaders. As a result of these, the moves towards union unity failed. For workers who were becoming more ready and determined to organise and struggle, the option of independent class organisation was far less visible than it could have been. At the same time, the petty bourgeoisie was developing its organisations, and elements within the petty bourgeoisie were beginning to turn more consciously towards workers.

Overall, then, the role of the CP in the period under discussion mirrors the confusion and disorientation in the Party generally. As far as the resurgence of the workers' movement was concerned, the Party actually obstructed the development of union unity, posed as an objective possibility in the situation. As far as the political fluidity within the black petty bourgeoisie was concerned, the CP followed, rather than tried to lead. Its own policies ensured that it was in no way capable of seeking to direct receptive elements within the black petty bourgeoisie towards a conscious alliance, behind the resurgent workers'

movement.

The decision to move the headquarters of the Party from Johannesburg to Cape Town meant a change in the Party leadership. The new Political Bureau consisted of H J Simons, Bill Andrews, Sam Kahn, Cissie Gool and Moses Kotane, who became General Secretary.²¹¹ CP historians argue that there was "a better spirit"²¹² in Cape Town, and explain the progress which the Party made after the 1938 conference as resulting from the move, and the change of leadership which it entailed.²¹³ The political situation in Cape Town, and the experience of the Communists there differed in important ways to that in Johannesburg.

In the case of the ANC, the opposition to the Seme leadership had resulted in his replacement at the 1936 conference. In the Cape, the opposition to the conservative leadership of the APO under Abdurahman had lead to the development of an opposition which organised outside the APO.²¹⁴ As we have seen, individual Communists in the Cape were relatively immunised from the purges in the third period, and, because of the rise of the IANC, were more connected with the broader movement of opposition than the Communists in Johannesburg. In 1935, the Communists in the Cape had become involved in the formation of the National Liberation League (NLL).²¹⁵ The League participated enthusiastically in the formation of the AAC,²¹⁶ and was a central organising force behind the formation of the NEUF.²¹⁷ One feature of the AAC which has not yet been mentioned is that it brought together into an organised forum Indians, Africans and Coloureds. For elements within the

Coloured population of the Western Cape, an alliance with radical Africans was a way forward out of the conservatism of the Abdurahman leadership. The collapse of the AAC took away that organised forum; it was left to the NLL to continue to provide it.

For the Communists in the Cape, this created two important differences with the situation in the Transvaal. Firstly, they co-operated with Trotskyists within the NLL; and, secondly, the NLL provided an ongoing organised forum through which an orientation to the black petty bourgeoisie could be structured, as opposed to the situation in the Transvaal, where the Party was shifting from the AAC to the ANC. The NLL was based primarily on individual membership - the NEUF was planned on the basis of organisational affiliations.²¹⁸ The attempt to develop, from the experience of the NLL, an organisation based on affiliations rather than individual membership fitted into the Peoples Front policy, especially at a time when the CP had clearly decided to follow the majority of the petty bourgeoisie away from the AAC. The NEUF, especially after the election of the new Political Bureau, came to be regarded as the Peoples Front, in the same way that the AAC had once been seen. The difference was that, very quickly, the NEUF connected with the rise of a popular mood of resistance in a way which the AAC had not.²¹⁹ But the shift of the Party headquarters to Cape Town also meant that the NEUF came to be influenced more directly by the political line of the Comintern. The relative freedom which the Cape leadership had

initially had to formulate policies in response to the popular mood came to be overtaken by the responsibility, imposed upon it inter alia by its new status, of propagandising the CP attitude to the war. The move to Cape Town did not simply mean an escape from the "atmosphere" of the Party in Johannesburg. It meant that some of the political problems which had promoted the atmosphere in Johannesburg were brought into the major success of the Party - the NEUF. The Party in Cape Town now had full responsibility for pursuing the policies and priorities dictated by the needs of the Soviet leadership. The relative freedom - which had immunised the Party in Cape Town from some of the problems of central and international policy was broken. As far as Communists in the leadership of the NEUF were concerned, the attempt by the organisation to take up immediate issues as they appeared in the mass struggle had to be blended together with the CP policy on the war. The co-operation with Trotskyists within the NEUF and NLL could no longer be pursued. These factors promoted the problem to which Bunting points: "Ideological disunity ... prevented the Front from establishing itself firmly on a permanent basis."²²⁰

Earlier in this chapter, the issue of an alliance between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class was posed. In the period under discussion, Tabata clearly believes that such an alliance existed and was expressed in the unity of the people and organisationally in the AAC.²²¹ According to Bunting, the NEUF laid the foundations of the national liberation movement which, in the Party view, represents a revolutionary popular alliance.²²²

The underlying objective bases for a class alliance were given an immediacy in the period under discussion by the Hertzog Bills and the segregation measures proposed in the Cape. But was that objective basis given subjective expression? Gomas refers to a "sea of enthusiasm for Unity and Action created by the Convention all over the Country".²²³ We have seen already that there was rising combativity. The extent to which the Convention promoted that combativity could be argued. It is clear, however, that it did not create it. To the extent that the black workers knew about the Convention and the Bills, this information was transmitted to them by and large through the organisations of the petty bourgeoisie. This meant that, initially at least, workers would not be left to form an understanding of the Bills in a political vacuum. The initial information which they received on the Bills would almost certainly reflect the particular emphasis and priorities of the petty bourgeoisie who passed on the information. When the question of action came to be posed, different class positions existed. The focus of the petty bourgeoisie was the decision in Parliament. The focus of the working class was the actual point of application of the laws.

For elements within the urban petty bourgeoisie in particular, once the Bills became law, the Native Representation Act assumed an increased practical significance - more so than the Lands Trust Act. But for workers, the immediate meaning of the Bills was not an election in which they had no part, or no direct part,²²⁴ but the toughening of the pass laws against which they were already struggling. To the extent that workers focussed on the NRC elections, this was because the issue was brought before them as the immediate focus of the petty bourgeoisie. The extent to which workers were aware of the Bills, however, has to be questioned. In 1936, one of the leaders of the AAC was to raise the point that knowledge of the Bills was not wide and that they had not even been translated into African languages.²²⁵ At the Day of Humiliation meetings (the size of which has been impossible to discover) it was the leaders of the petty bourgeois organisations who explained the Bills - and gave their vision of what should be done about them. As SAW argued:

"There is a danger of the AAC becoming a parliament of the Bantu people, with annual conferences, to discuss abstract sentimental questions of no importance unless ways and means can be devised by which this movement can be activated and the organisation made really representative of the oppressed and exploited workers of South Africa."²²⁶

That situation was not achieved in the period under discussion. At every stage, it was the organised petty bourgeoisie taking the lead, defining the issues, deciding the way forward - and workers, in the great majority unorganised, being informed of the

decisions and interpretations. It was a situation, in other words, in which the process of drawing workers into the movement directed against the Hertzog Bills was a process under the leadership of the organised petty bourgeoisie.

Tabata conveys the idea that the radical decisions of the AAC reflected the upward pressure of the masses on the leaders. As we have seen, the decisions of the AAC were not all, or consistently, radical.²²⁷ The 1937 decisions promoted by the left were accompanied by a petty bourgeois set of economic demands - and a constitution which gave a place on the Executive to Chiefs. Those policy decisions of 1937 were taken in what was becoming the empty shell of an organisation against which the majority of key leaders of the organised petty bourgeoisie had turned their backs. And if Tabata's vision is valid, why did the AAC move to the right, after the 1937 conference, when the resurgence of the workers' movement was more developed, from the radical positions of 1935, when that resurgence was only beginning to develop? The petty bourgeoisie are not immunised from the pressure of the masses. The rising combativity of the working class would have permeated upwards, especially to those elements within the petty bourgeoisie closest to the working class. But, especially in the first part of the period under discussion (the part which Tabata regards as the left phase of the AAC), powerful mass pressure did not come from either of the two most powerful possibilities - a wave of class action, or powerful independent class organisations. It was in fact the absence of organised mass pressure which explains some of the conservative decisions of the

AAC.

Apart from the driving force of working class mass action, how could the interests of the working class be articulated within the AAC, and how could the working class participate in its decisions, and raise its own priorities within the organisation? Despite the position of the CP, and the decision of the AAC to set up local branches, the policy was not carried through. Although unions were represented at the AAC meetings, there is no evidence of their leaders raising specifically working class demands - or of the unions being represented on the AAC Executive. There was no developed system of rank and file participation, or channels of leadership accountability. The participation of the supporters of the AAC was effectively limited to propaganda meetings where no decisions were taken. In the actual course of events, any potential which existed for the interests of the working class to be independently articulated within the organisational framework provided by the AAC was not exploited. The confused and disoriented CP was tailing the petty bourgeoisie, in no political position to attempt to draw it into an alliance behind the working class, or to seek to build working class leadership within the AAC. The fact that radicals like Tabata believed that an alliance had already been spontaneously constructed meant that they were unable to turn themselves to the task of actually building it.

For the petty bourgeoisie, the underlying political process of resurgence within the workers' movement was not yet obvious. Nor

were they being turned towards that resurgence by the political groups operating within their class. Neither through action nor the strength of its organisation was the workers' movement acting as an immediate factor on the political consciousness of the organised petty bourgeoisie. This does not mean that elements within the petty bourgeoisie did not turn towards the workers. But, to the extent that they did so, it was generally because they believed that there was a mass of politically uneducated and inactive blacks who could be "aroused" by the politicised educated petty bourgeoisie. Jabavu wrote that it was "fortunate for the Government that the masses of our people are not aware of what is going on in Parliament as they do not read the papers. This however is no security for the European race; for the intelligent [sic] Blacks have a way of passing on the information and thus act as an agency for creating distrust in the rule of White people."²²⁸ The view of the CP was not without similarities. Referring to the AAC and United Front Conferences, SAW wrote in October 1936:

"[T]hey were preceded by a coming together of the leaders of the different organisations which feel the necessity for unity. The people of SA who are in the majority unorganised, both European and non-European did not participate, nor has the meaning and future of these movements been grasped by the individual workers. But this means that we have the advantage in this country of having leaders who see the necessity of rousing and organising the people and that the conferences were preliminary ones not based on already existing mass action of workers and people, but

which WILL lead to ACTION."²²⁹

In the absence of any definitive pressure from the working class, either through organisation or powerful class action, and given the political approaches amongst both the radicals and conservatives within the black petty bourgeoisie, elements within the leadership of the AAC became more and more vulnerable to pressure from the state. Without a leadership consciously aiming at mobilising the mass of workers, there was little possibility of effective resistance to the passage of the Hertzog Bills. Given the preliminary state of the resurgence of the workers' movement, there was little likelihood of spontaneous mass action in opposition to the passage of those Bills. The white liberals acted as a conscious political force drawing the AAC leadership towards participation within the framework of the Bills. Consistent with the political philosophy of liberalism, they were prepared to counsel opposition to the Bills, but also acquiescence, once the Bills became law. Obeying the law, and campaigning within the law to change it, were greater priorities than the struggle to resist the law.²³⁰ It was in this way that the AAC, as an organisation of opposition to the Bills, was effectively still-born.

In the first phase of its existence the AAC proceeded, from an organisation whose existence reflected the potential of an effective opposition class alliance, to being a top-heavy body - a forum for leaders from the petty bourgeoisie - more and more detached from the real possibilities of developing rank and file

organisation and struggle. Several factors combined to produce the breakdown of the resistance by the AAC to the Hertzog Bills: it was immunised by its structure from organised rank and file control; it lacked a consistent, organised, articulated working class presence and input; many of its leaders were subjected to consistent pressure from the white liberals to focus on the parliamentary process, at a time when the underlying resurgence in the workers' movement was still in its early stage of development. Consequently, its initial programme reflected the interests of those with the franchise, and the possibility of becoming land-owning capitalists, ahead of the interests of the mass of black workers.

The radicals made gains, in terms of policy, in what was in the process of becoming the empty shell of an effectively still-born organisation of resistance to the Hertzog Bills. The collapse of the organisation as an effective instrument of opposition to the Hertzog Bills was based on the absence of the class alliance which expressed fully the interests of the working class - the very class alliance whose existence the radicals presumed. The political developments represented within the AAC and reflected in its development were largely conducted above the heads and outside of the experience of workers. To the extent that there was a class alliance, it was one in which the petty bourgeoisie led, and its interests dominated.

The assessment above provides the basis also for an understanding

of the class relations within the NEUF. Bunting points to a central similarity between the two organisations when he writes of the NEUF that "this was a Front organised from the top, and not from below".²³¹ There were two important differences. By the time the NEUF was created, and definitely in 1939, when it became an organisation with a much broader location, the development of the rise of combativity inside the working class had been in motion for a significantly longer period. A significant stage in the development of the NEUF was the March 1939 rally, which drew a crowd of 20,000 - and developed into a violent clash.²³² By this time, the black unions were far more developed than had been the case even three years previously, when the AAC was formed. Secondly, the NEUF was set up by mainly left-wing political forces and was, from its inception, strongly influenced by the CP. This meant that there was, unlike in the leadership of the AAC, a declared commitment to mass organisation in the leadership of the NEUF. But when the NEUF meetings began to trigger off a mass response, this brought the political problems posed by the policies of the CP to the fore. The mass response to the NEUF created a growing pressure upon that organisation for leadership. The overall political state of the CP did not equip it to give that leadership. Simons quotes Cissie Gool at the 27 March demonstration in Cape Town as saying: "Our weapons will be the strike, the boycott and peaceful demonstration."²³³ As the events of that day showed, the peacefulness or otherwise of demonstrations was not simply up to the demonstrators. And Simons does not add that Cissie Gool continued: "But the time is not now."²³⁴

Throughout the period under discussion, the CP had argued the need for mass organisation and mass protest.²³⁵ These general calls posed questions of more specific programme, both of demands and action. Would the NEUF, whose supporters must have included some of the Coloured Union members in the Cape, campaign like the CP for a racially differential minimum wage? How could the Party make an open contribution, and contribute to an open debate on programme, if it was not allowed to publicly criticise its allies? When would the time come to use the weapons which Cissie Gool identified? How could preparations be made for that time? The CP had already been forced, in the face of attacks from the Transvaal ANC, to make clear that it was not seeking the leadership of the ANC, and had no interests different from anyone else.²³⁶ Logically, and consistently with the whole Peoples Front approach, the Party could not campaign for policies which were different to those of its "allies". These were problems posed in the development of the NEUF - more sharply, because the Cape CP now had responsibility for implementing the official line of the Comintern. This meant that, soon after its formation, the priority of the NEUF became propagandising the CP approach to the war.

Tabata's assessment of the existence of the "radical, united, peoples alliance" reflects a failure to take into account class differences within "the people" and an overestimation of the upward pressure which was being operated on petty bourgeois political leaders at the time. The clearly visible political

strength, in this period, was the political strength of the state. And when the majority of petty bourgeois political leaders made their political choices, it was state power, rather than the upward pressure of the masses, which operated upon them as a major pressure. Within a short period, this situation was to change. But the change did not come about primarily because of the political developments within the petty bourgeoisie. At the root of political changes in the next period of our study was the visible division, within the state, on the question of the war, and the massive development of the resurgence of the workers' movement whose beginnings and initial development we have already seen. It was these developments which were in fact to have the major responsibility for political developments within the petty bourgeoisie.

The process through which workers re-emerge into developing and sustained struggle and the building of their organisations after a period of blows and defeats does not follow a specific or pre-determined timetable. There is a general pattern - but within that pattern there are a series of options. Once the conditions for a resurgence are established, the exact timing, the rhythm and the forms which it will take vary enormously from situation to situation. Finally these things depend on the subjective factor - a recovery of morale after the impact of the last set of defeats, a growing feeling that struggle is possible, a belief that conditions can and should be changed, growing confidence that something can be done about them, the increasing recognition that individual experiences and moods are shared, and the

organisational framework through which that collective experience can be articulated.

For a period, however, while the process of resurgence within the workers' movement was developing beneath the surface, it was the political decisions of the petty bourgeoisie which dominated the black organisations. That resurgence was thus not taking place in a political vacuum in which workers would be untouched by the political influence of other classes. The unions were growing, but were still relatively small. With the exception of these organisations, which were weakened by the failure of their leaders to achieve a single federation, workers, beginning to look for organisation as they broke away from the impact of the state attacks and defeats, would have the organisations under the leadership of the petty bourgeoisie as the most visible option before them. The precise impact of the politics of the petty bourgeoisie on the working class is impossible to measure. As we have seen, for the most part the political developments in the petty bourgeoisie took place outside of the experience of workers. But, to the extent that there was an impact, it could only have been for workers to be disoriented by the political choices and decisions already made by the petty bourgeoisie - responding as it was to the pressure of the state.

CHAPTER FIVE

1939 - 1946

At the outbreak of the war, the black unions were divided. The ANC was beginning to be re-organised, but it still existed not primarily as a national organisation, but as a set of badly-integrated provincial organisations.¹ The AAC, despite the apparent militancy of its formation and early history was not set to meet, after its 1937 conference, until 1940.² A significant section of the black petty bourgeoisie had become absorbed into the structures of the NRC. The resurgence of the workers' movement had not developed beyond sporadic and localised action. The number of African workers who went on strike in 1940 dropped sharply from the 1939 level.³ But this situation was to change very quickly. Within a few years the ANC had become a genuinely national organisation, drawing in new layers of the petty bourgeoisie, and adopting more left-wing positions. Repeated strike action in 1942/43 was to coalesce into a significant strike wave, the impetus of which extended into the miners' strike of 1946. With the strike wave, there developed a series of working class community mobilisations. Trade union organisation developed, was extended into broader areas, and its membership rose sharply. And this resurgence of the workers' movement, in the form of widespread action and developing organisation, took place in a context in which the ruling class was divided over its

position on the war, and increasingly faced with the problem of securing its social base, and stabilising the class alliance through which it organised its rule.

The war accelerated and promoted processes already at work which were to increase the strength of the black working class, and promote outbreaks of class action on a wide scale. The industrial expansion of the early 1930's had now run for several years, and its consequences were being consolidated. Amongst black workers, they meant the further development of an urban industrial proletariat, increased in size, and also one whose experience was increasingly becoming that of an urban proletariat. Between 1936 and 1946, the annual rate of growth of the black population in the urban areas was 4.33%. This compares with a rate in the rural areas over the same period of 1.05%, and 2.77% over the period 1911-1921 (a period of a big industrial expansion). In some areas, the population more than doubled over the same ten year period; e.g. Vereeniging/Vanderbijlpark from 38,055 to 80,693. In all urban areas, the increase was large; e.g.: Johannesburg from 240,939 to 440,452; East Rand, 271,102 to 330,722.⁴ And these are official figures which make no allowance for the tens of thousands who were living in every urban area illegally.

The social changes which accompany an industrial expansion were maturing. In particular, there was a sharp increase in the number of women in the urban areas,⁵ and an accompanying increase of the number of urban youth,⁶ whose whole experience and set of expectations were located in the urban areas. The labour

requirements of capital, at a time of industrial expansion and changes in the labour process, opened up new jobs for blacks in industry. This process was accelerated by the need to promote local manufacturing for the war effort, at a time when there was increasing difficulty in obtaining imports.⁷

The number of black workers employed in manufacturing almost doubled in the war years, from 143,000 in 1938/39 to 248,000 in 1944/45. The total number of whites employed in manufacturing also increased in the same period from 93,000 to 112,000. But as a proportion of the workforce in manufacturing, this represented a drop from 36% to 29%. In the same period, the proportion of the manufacturing workforce which was African rose from 49% to 54%. Together with the rise in the numbers and proportion of black workers went a change in the occupation structure of black workers. The changing labour requirements of expanding industry, coupled with the shortages of skilled labour exacerbated by a movement of white workers into the defence forces, led to the increased employment of black workers in semi-skilled and skilled jobs.⁸ There was thus not simply a numerical increase of black workers, but also an increase in their industrial strength, as growing numbers of them were drawn into skilled and semi-skilled work in concentrated areas of strategically important production.

At the same time as these population increases were creating great strains on the provision of social services and promoting great social tensions in the urban areas, inflation was rising

sharply, and continued to rise through the entire course of the war.⁹ Continued crop failures in the rural areas,¹⁰ apart from the hardship that they caused there, could only increase the tensions which were being sharpened in the towns. This came through extra movement to the already overcrowded towns, and added pressure on workers in the urban areas to use part of their wages for their families in the rural areas (the time had long since passed that rural production was able to subsidise wages).¹¹ The process over many years of deterioration in rural production brought with it the concurrent deterioration of social services which had been traditionally provided in the rural areas - in particular, the care of children and old people. The experience of the urban proletariat combined to undermine traditional tribal authority structures, even though the state tried to maintain these in certain important ways - for example, discipline on the mines. There was a massive and growing housing problem.¹² The increased numbers of women and children in the towns posed increasingly sharply the problem of non-existent social services - like child care; or totally inadequate services - like education.¹³ All of these factors combined to promote a growing catalogue of grievances, and sharpen growing social tensions in the increasing working class concentrations in the urban areas.

The structural changes in the production process served, in themselves, to increase the social weight of the black workers and the working class generally. The worsening economic and social conditions in the context of which these changes occurred served in turn to promote the grievances of black workers. They

occurred at a time when the underlying process making for a resurgence of the workers' movement was itself beginning to mature. Renewed class action on a wide scale became an increasing likelihood. It was these developments which were set to challenge the balance of class forces as it had been established. In the meantime, in the period leading up to the war and in its first years, the ruling class was itself being weakened by divisions over its position on the war. When the challenge to the balance of forces was carried through, it would happen in conditions where a structurally strengthened black working class confronted a divided ruling class.

As we have seen earlier, the fusion government was intended by the ruling class to resolve the question of a social base, and the question of discipline over that social base. But it was a solution which was unstable from the very outset. The period leading up to war and the outbreak of the war opened up deep divisions inside the ruling class, and revealed the instability of the fusion government, and the irresolved issues of stabilising a social base for the ruling class. Elements within Afrikaner nationalism saw in a victory for Hitler the prospects of improving their own position in the ruling class, in relation both to the largely English-speaking big capitalists who dominated the South African ruling class, and to British imperialism generally. An anti-British position struck a strong chord with Afrikaner workers when it was tied to overt hostility to the big capitalists. This hostility had been clearly expressed

and developed in the 1922 miners strike, but could be taken back even earlier. On the question of whether South Africa should be neutral, or give support to Britain, the United Party split largely along the lines of the pre-fusion parties. With the support of the Native Representatives, Labour Party jingoists and strongly pro-British elements from Natal, Smuts was able to win a parliamentary majority committing South Africa to enter the war in support of the Allies.¹⁴ The United Party split, with Hertzog leaving to form the Afrikaner Party, and Smuts taking over as Prime Minister. A coalition popular front was set up, with the Labour Party being given ministerial seats in the war cabinet.¹⁵

Able to draw support from the English-speaking petty bourgeoisie and the majority of the leadership of the white unions, Smuts's government had a parliamentary stability, and he was returned in 1943 to head another coalition government.¹⁶ But the reality, as far as the stability of the government of the ruling class was concerned, was different. Parallel to the movement of blacks to the towns had been a movement of Afrikaners.¹⁷ This had been accelerated through the employment policies of the Pact government, by the economic depression, and then by the industrial expansion of the 1930's. This meant that Afrikaners were coming to make up an increasing proportion of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the white working class.¹⁸ For a period, this population and economic movement was not given a clear, organised political expression. This was especially the case while the fusion government was still in power. The growing social weight of Afrikaans workers, the ongoing attempt by initially minority

elements within the nationalist movement to win the allegiance of those workers,¹⁹ and the break-up of the fusion government all promoted conditions in which a re-organised Afrikaner nationalist movement was to turn more consistently to exploit the grievances of Afrikaans workers. The pro-war policies of the union leaders, the LP and, after June 1941, the CP, created a partial political vacuum, as far as an aggressive anti-war politics aimed at white workers was concerned. This the Nationalists were able to exploit. Despite the electoral stability of the governing popular front, conditions were developing in which the form by which the ruling class alliance with white workers was organised was to come under increasing challenge.

The dramatic social upheaval of war accelerates social developments and exacerbates social tensions. It poses political questions in the sharpest possible terms, placing before each class and its organisations clear political choices. Questions of basic human values and ideals are immediately placed before all sections of society. Workers are no longer just told that it is their duty to create profits. They are now told that it is immediately necessary for them to go out and fight and die to defend the status quo. They are no longer simply expected to put up with oppression. Now they are told instead that they have to go out and fight to defend the status quo against oppression. As far as working class organisations are concerned, it is no longer enough for the state that they should maintain routine collaboration; nor is it enough that workers maintain routine

levels of output. The state mounts extra pressure for increasingly rigorous full-time support from the organisations of the working class. And it mounts similar pressure for the industrial collaboration of workers on the shop-floor.

In the 1914-1918 war, these pressures brought to the fore tendencies for class collaboration which were already deeply located amongst the leadership of the workers' organisations. This was reflected in the massive response of social patriotism, first demonstrated and then developed by that leadership. Class collaboration on day to day issues was carried through into support for "your own country" (i.e. ruling class) against another country (i.e. a competing national bourgeoisie). Support for your own ruling class was carried through to its necessary conclusion, and the leadership of the workers' organisations campaigned for workers to give up their demands and increase their productivity (offer their labour or their lives) in collaboration with the ruling class against the foreign enemy. For the ruling class, in the conditions of war, that collaboration cannot be half-hearted or qualified. There is only one form of collaboration which is acceptable - the complete surrender by workers of their own class interests, workers who then have to fall in line behind the ruling class (or, to put it more graphically, stand in front of them as cannon-fodder).

The turn to more developed forms of collaboration by the leadership of the workers' organisations went together with theorisations and legitimations on the ideological level, in

terms of which the basic contradiction between capital and labour was defined out of existence.²⁰ It was in the face of this massive betrayal of the struggle to pursue the independent interests of the working class that the Third International was formed. But the formation of a new International could not remove the pressures for collaboration from the ruling class. What it could potentially do was to more effectively arm the working class and its leaders to better resist those pressures. In reality, as will be discussed further below, the Third International in its turn also pursued policies of class collaboration during the war, although the basis of those policies was different to that upon which the collaboration of the Second International had developed.²¹

The issue of its policy on the war was posed clearly before each organisation and each class - not simply as a relatively abstract ideological issue, but in terms of immediate political answers to concrete questions. Would the different organisations call for war volunteers? Would the conditions of the war be exploited, in order to pursue political programmes developed before the war? Would those political programmes be extended? Would there be active support for the ruling class and its war effort - or passive acquiescence - or an escalation of the struggle against the ruling class? From the majority of the TLC unions,²² from the Cape Federation,²³ and from the LP, the ruling class was offered almost immediate collaboration.

The first response from the organised black petty bourgeoisie came in a statement issued by the ANC executive on 9 September 1939.²⁴ It offered conditional support, provided that the government gave "military training whereby our men shall not be used as labourers but as soldiers", and that the "African people are included in the South African Body Politic and Defence Schemes". There are differing accounts of what was decided at the ANC conference in December 1939. According to the record of the decisions in Karis and Carter, there was to be no support "unless and until the government grants the African full democratic and citizenship rights".²⁵ Some accounts say that the resolution was amended to give support to the parliamentary decision to enter the war, and to call on the government "to consider the expediency" of granting full citizenship rights.²⁶ Whichever decision was taken, it was clear that there was division and an initial lack of certainty within the ANC about precisely what attitude to adopt. By July 1940, the ANC stated its position unambiguously. A joint statement issued with the AAC declared support for the war:

"Since the chiefs who are the rulers of the African people have already informed the Government that the African people are loyal to the King of England, and to the Union Government, we too affirm that declaration, but we say that the Africans be accepted as citizens in this country, and be granted citizenship rights...."²⁷ (The statement also called for the abolition of oppressive laws.)

Apart from the differences between conservatives, who supported the war, and radicals, who did not, it seems likely that there

was a tactical confusion which did not follow a simple conservative/radical divide, about whether to exploit the war conditions through expressions of loyalty, or through more aggressive demands. That tactical confusion came to be "answered", by and large, by the changing policy which the government pursued towards the demands made by the black petty bourgeoisie.

The support which the government had for the war effort represented, in the first case, the logical progression of class collaboration of the Second International; and in the second, the logical line-up of an oppressed section of the petty bourgeoisie with that part of the ruling class, locally and internationally, which seemed the most progressive and liberal. Consistent organised opposition to the war effort came from elements within the Afrikaner Nationalist movement and a minority of trade union leaders. It was, however, the class action of black workers, which was to create the greatest challenge to the war effort. Hirson has argued that the mass of black workers were "not pro-war, not anti-war, just indifferent". Ballinger was to report with concern that blacks did not see the war as their concern. In the course of the war, it became clear that as far as the organised black petty bourgeoisie was concerned, there was a considerable depth of support for British imperialism. Black workers did not see it as their war. But the conditions which the war imposed on them were their concern. And, by a massive wave of class action, they gave their answer to the calls to put the war

effort as the first priority.

At the end of 1940, the moves which had begun in 1936/37 to re-organise the ANC as the principal organisation of the black petty bourgeoisie were extended, with the replacement of the stop-gap leader Mahabane, by Xuma.²⁸ Immediately after the ANC conference, steps were taken to confirm the principal role of the ANC and remove the tensions promoted by, and reflected in, the overlap between the ANC and the AAC.²⁹ On the initiative of the ANC, a committee of three delegates from each organisation was set up. Its recommendation was that the ANC should deal with "the political aspirations and consitutional rights of the Africans", and the AAC should be "the co-ordinating and consultative committee of African national organisations, dealing with social, educational, economic, political and industrial matters". It also recommended that "except in exceptional circumstances organisations of a mainly local character should not be eligible for direct affiliation to the AAC."³⁰

This agreement was in part codifying the status quo in terms of which the AAC was allowed to lie dormant unless and until the petty bourgeois leaders had reason to look for consultations outside of the framework of the ANC; it ruled out the decision of the 1937 AAC conference to set up local branches of the organisation.³¹ In 1940 the AAC met for a three-yearly conference. This was in accordance with its constitution, but it reflected also the turmoil within the petty bourgeoisie, without which it is more than likely that the constitutional requirement would have been ignored. A radical group at the conference succeeded in getting an agreement to hold an emergency conference in 1941.³²

This radical group opposed the AAC/ANC agreement, fearing that it was a formula designed to stop the AAC from building direct support amongst the masses. As a result of their opposition, a decision on the recommendation was deferred.³³ (It was then rejected by the 1941 conference.)³⁴ In terms of any base, the AAC rested largely on the base of the radicals within it. This was almost exclusively restricted to the Transkei, with limited influence in only one industrial area - the Western Cape.

Plans to make Xuma President of the ANC go back at least to 1938. The immediate basis for his election in 1940 was a combination of the openings for a reforming alliance with sections of the state which appeared to have been created by the war, and the initial failure of the ANC to develop a clear position and approach which could exploit those openings. Xuma therefore assumed a mandate to develop a productive link with the state, and extend the re-organisation of the ANC to establish it as the cohesive primary organisation of the black petty bourgeoisie. Xuma's election had a lot to do with behind-the-scenes organisation by Calata.³⁵ Calata had recognised that a new leadership would come - either through the rise of opposition to the traditional leaders, or through a tactical decision made by those leaders.³⁶ Calata chose the latter course, and was instrumental in making sure that it was accepted by the organisation as a whole.³⁷ Xuma clearly believed that, in conditions where the pro-British element of the ruling class appeared to be rid of the pressure to reach an accord with anti-

black Afrikaner nationalism, the prospects for an alliance with the ruling class were better than they had been for some time; gains could be made, provided demands were articulated forcefully.³⁸ In this belief he demonstrated a misplaced confidence, both in white liberal influences within the government, and in the willingness and capacity of any government of capital to put the extension of effective political reforms to blacks ahead of the task of maintaining discipline over black workers.³⁹

In general, the fact and experience of oppression creates a ready-made basis for receptivity for liberal ideals amongst the non-exploited black petty bourgeoisie. At a more concrete level, the special appeal of liberalism for sections of the black petty bourgeoisie was that it was the ideology of alliance with a section of the state. It was perceived as providing a means of political opposition to some of the measures adopted by the state, but with the support of a section of the state. The receptivity for liberal ideals amongst the petty bourgeoisie can coincide with a receptivity to democratic demands amongst the mass of the working class. But it has a different basis - representing in one case the aspiration for the freedom to rise within expanding capitalism and, in the other, the necessity to seek collective solutions, and to be able to sell labour power at the best price without restrictions. This tendency for the different class interests to come to the fore more than once. We have seen it already in the case of opposition to the Hertzog Bills.⁴⁰ In the period under discussion it could be seen in the

apparently common struggle around housing, which drew together sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the working class.⁴¹ But the class difference, underlying the transient coincidence of interests, is always there, and at different points, liable to pull the different classes in different directions. For the petty bourgeoisie, the demand which grew over this period was for freehold rights.⁴² For the working class, the issue was not one of property-ownership, but the need to have housing at the cheapest possible cost at the points where labour power could be most easily sold.⁴³

At the beginning of the war, the ideological turmoil within the petty bourgeoisie was not yet concretised into specific demands. There was a lack of clarity about precisely what approach to take to the war and what tactics to employ. It was a period of considerable ideological flux within the ranks of the black petty bourgeoisie. The fact that the black petty bourgeoisie was searching for political answers was to be reflected, within a relatively short time of the outbreak of the war, in a flurry of organisational and political developments. How did the CP approach this situation of ideological flux and movement?

With the rise to power, and expansionist aggression, of fascism in Germany, the dominant political interest of the Soviet leadership was perceived as avoiding an attack by Germany.⁴⁴ The form through which the Soviet Union tried to achieve this goal was through an attempt to build an alliance internationally with

progressive allies. On the international level, this took the form of diplomatic overtures to the major bourgeois democracies. On the national level it took the form of a quest for anti-war alliances with any forces, provided only that they would oppose the expansionism of German imperialism. This was the peoples' front policy, which was generally explained as representing the quest for an alliance with democracy against fascism. The reality is, however, that both the Soviet government and national Communist Parties tried to pursue alliances with **whatever** forces were likely to oppose German imperialism - or prevent an attack against the Soviet Union. Effectively, this meant alliances with whatever forces were ready to support British, French and US imperialism. The peoples' front turn of 1935 promoted the belief that the struggle against fascism was the struggle for alliances with the "democratic" imperialists.

As the war approached there was, therefore, the logical belief amongst elements within the CP that the position of the Party, on the outbreak of war, would be support for the democracies against fascism. In June 1939, the Party issued a pamphlet "Must we fight?"⁴⁵ According to one CP historian, this "was a very clear exposition of the Communist Party's attitude to the coming war...."⁴⁶ In fact the pamphlet gave no precise answer to the question which it posed. That this was so was recognised by the Party in March 1940. Delivering the report on "The War and South Africa" at the Party conference in March 1940, J Morkel said of the pamphlet:

"No clear lead was given as to the attitude that should be

adopted in the event of war. The omission was deliberate. The complexities of the international situation did not allow any conclusions to be drawn as to the character of the war that, we felt, would come. We confined ourselves to a demand for a Peace Front based on mutual defence treaties, coupled with a 'clearly stated determination to resist fascist violence with armed force'." How was it that the Party acquired clarity on "the character of the war"?⁴⁷

In April 1937, **SAW** had discounted the possibilities of any agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union, in an article under the heading "Soviet Union will Never be Friendly with Hitler".⁴⁸ On 23 August 1939, a week before the German invasion of Poland, the Soviet government signed a non-aggression Pact with Germany.⁴⁹ The move, like the people's front policy, was designed to avoid an attack against the Soviet Union. Once the fact that war was inevitable had become clear to the Soviet leadership, the continuation of the quest for an alliance with the democracies against Germany seemed to increase the threat of German attack. Consistent with their own priority of avoiding such an attack, and their own assessment of how to do that, the Soviet leadership broke with their previous line of an alliance with the democracies. The way to avoid an attack by fascism was no longer seen as an alliance with democracy against fascism, but through an accommodation with fascism itself.⁵⁰

This move, which 'clarified' the fact that the approaching war

was an imperialist war, caused massive confusion within the world Communist movement, which, since 1935, had been promoting the politics of an alliance with the democracies to stop fascism. It created a crisis for the CPSA - reflected in the fact that the Stalin/Hitler Pact is not mentioned, much less explained, by Simons, Bunting, or Lerumo. It had been possible to encompass the generally pro-British feeling amongst the leadership of the black petty bourgeoisie within a broad anti-war alliance. It had been possible, at the same time, to maintain organised links with the white union leadership on the same basis. The Stalin/Hitler pact placed enormous strains on these links, and the way in which they had been built up. When both of these groups shifted, at the outbreak of war, towards support for Britain, this placed even greater pressure on the CP to move with them. At the same time, however, the CP had on no single issue opposed the line of the Soviet government.

When the war broke out some leaders, members and supporters of the CP followed the apparent logic of the peoples front policy, and declared support for what they now saw as the war against fascism. The Guardian 1939 reported a CP meeting in Johannesburg immediately after the outbreak of war, where a CP platform speaker stated: "The attitude of the Communist Party of South Africa to the war was one of whole-hearted co-operation with the forces opposing fascism."⁵¹ An article in *Nkululeko* reflected a continuation of the "alliance with democracy against fascism" policy and expressed a note of ambivalence about the decision by Smuts to assume emergency powers:

"It is clear that these emergency powers will affect any and every organisation of the people, but we are of the opinion that they are not primarily aimed at the CP. It is our opinion that they are aimed at any pro-Nazi elements in the country, and their irresponsible followers, who may be disloyal to the country unless they are prevented in time."⁵²

Bunting argues that the "Central Committee had no doubts about the character of the war",⁵³ basing his argument on extracts from a Central Committee policy statement issued days after the outbreak of the war. On the basis of the extracts from the same policy statement, the 1981 history of the CP argues: "The Communist Party's first statements were somewhat tentative."⁵⁴ The report to the Party conference explained a dilemma which the Party faced:

"The policy was ... one of opposition to the war. But the complication arose out of a split in the Government on the war issue. There seemed to be a danger that the Hertzog-Malan combination might attempt to seize power by a coup, or force an election. They would in either case have stood for 'neutrality', but a neutrality which would have drawn them further into support for German imperialism. Internally, they would have introduced a fascist regime. The party, therefore, while declaring opposition to the war, stated that at the moment, the struggle was in South Africa against the Nazis."⁵⁵

According to Morkel, this view "undoubtedly weakened the line of

struggle against the war, since it meant a passive acceptance of the Smuts government and its war policy."⁵⁶ The same viewpoint - that the struggle against Nazism had to be carried on in South Africa as a struggle "against the Hertzog-Malan forces and all pro-Nazis" is put forward by Bunting as confirmation of the Party's correct attitude to the war. Bunting continues, to point approvingly to a second statement by the Central Committee which reflected exactly the view which Morkel criticised: The Africans, Coloureds and Indians, it states, "must see that the Hertzog-Malan-Pirow group does not take over the government of the Union. They must demand that the Smuts Government suppress the Nazi supporters who are out to enslave the Non-Europeans still further."⁵⁷

All the Party statements at the time contain clear demands for full civil liberties to be granted to blacks. On the immediate issue of attitude to the war, there is an equally obvious ambiguity and confusion within the Party. These were reflected in the NEUF positions. In September, the NEUF issued a policy statement, "On the NEUF and the War":⁵⁸ "The NEUF ... realising the dangers of fascism and Nazism to the rights and liberties of the non-Europeans of South Africa, reaffirms its determination to fight against fascism." It argued that the real danger of fascism in South Africa arose from the denial of democratic rights to the black people, and that the only effective way of fighting fascism was for the government to grant those rights. It ended with a call on the government to remove colour bar laws, and to take immediate steps to stop profiteering, higher rents, and the

rising cost of living. Bunting puts forward the statement as an example of a clear anti-war position.⁵⁹ But the absence of a precise statement about whether blacks should join up or not is noticeable; and the lack of clarity on this issue was pointed to by Z Gool, who delivered the statement. She said that on her recent tour she "was repeatedly asked what line the NEUF would take on the war situation". Informally she said that "non-Europeans should think very carefully before they volunteered for active service."⁶⁰

In the initial phase of the war the Party was not able to put forward an unambiguous position which clearly answered the questions being posed in the situation. The popular front approach had resulted in a widespread belief within the Party that the correct position was support for the war effort against fascism. At the same time, the Party assumed the responsibility of supporting the Stalin/Hitler Pact. The confusion which this situation created affected Party members. But its significance was wider than the impact within the Party. This initial uncertainty occurred in the context of widespread ideological turmoil within sections of the black petty bourgeoisie. For a period at the outbreak of the war, the Party disqualified itself from responding to that situation with clarity and consistency.

Morkel argues that "the doubt about the war being Imperialist" was resolved, "mainly because of the change in line of the British Party".⁶¹ It is likely that, as it had done before, the Party took its policy from the Soviet leadership, as soon as that

policy was clear. The result was that, despite the basis of confusion which had been created within the Party by the peoples front policy, within a short period it began, in official policy statements, to reflect the Soviet assessment of the war. Its propaganda and agitation began to reflect the political and economic conditions which the war meant for the great majority of blacks. Freed from the policy of no public criticism of allies, with no immediate prospects of an anti-war alliance with the TLC, the Party developed a powerful anti-war position, which began to be reflected in gains for the organisation. Brookes states that by "April 1941, the CP could show a 40 per cent increase in membership over its 1940 figure" (of 280).⁶² Nonetheless, there can be little doubt that the basis of confusion which had been revealed in the Party had not been definitively removed. The greatest growth in membership and influence of the Party was to come when, after the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941,⁶³ the Party changed policy, returning to the first form of the Peoples Front approach, and seeking once more to build an alliance with democracy against fascism.

The initial reaction of the Party to the invasion of the Soviet Union was a call to fight fascism by struggling against segregation:

"Only when the people of South Africa have been assured by the Government's practical actions of the sincerity of its claim to fight for democracy can they give it their full support in the prosecution of the war.

"The Communist Party declares that the utmost degree of vigilance and preparedness is needed to deal with the elements that will attempt to bring about the downfall of the Soviet Union.

"The Communist Party therefore calls upon all workers, friends of democracy and oppressed peoples to redouble their efforts to organise themselves in their struggle for rights and liberties and social justice.

"The successful struggle for workers' rights is the only means of ensuring victory over Fascism in South Africa and in Europe...."⁶⁴

Within a limited period, this position had changed. The fight against fascism was no longer dependent on the struggle for workers' rights. The priority was support for the Allied war effort. The fight against fascism was dependent upon a military victory against Hitler. There were clearly Party members and supporters for whom this change of policy represented a return to the "correct orientation", from which the Stalin/Hitler Pact had been a confusing deviation.⁶⁵

On the surface, as had been the case with much of the preceding period, it appeared that the petty bourgeoisie were the chief political actors and, in addition, that they were consistently moving to the left. The state of things at the level of appearances suggested that the organised petty bourgeoisie might be in a position to give leadership to the workers, at a time when the appetite for struggle amongst the working class was growing. The pattern appeared to be something like this: 'The

politicised petty bourgeoisie develops the ANC and its policies. These reflect a consistent move to the left. First, Seme is replaced by Mahabane, then Mahabane is replaced by Xuma. As the organisation moves to the left, so it begins to grow in influence, and become the authoritative organisation of the opposition movement. The workers meantime are relatively passive, and not politicised.' That is an approach which is reflected, with variants, in the work of some analysts of the period. It gets things almost directly the wrong way round. As events unfolded, the underlying process which had been developing within the working class came to the fore. A massive wave of spontaneous working class action developed. This became the decisive factor in the balance of class forces, and a major factor in determining the pace and nature of political developments within the organisations of the petty bourgeoisie which occurred within the context of that balance of class forces. It was primarily the spontaneous action by workers which politicised those workers, developed the whole workers' movement, and taught political lessons to the petty bourgeoisie. And it was the process making for a resurgence of struggle - the fact that groups of workers eventually will be pushed into struggle because of the conditions of life and work imposed upon them by capitalism, which prepared the working class for the action which was to follow, rather than any of the organisations of the petty bourgeoisie. Indeed, when the action came, it was unexpected, and usually, unwelcomed by the petty bourgeoisie.

In the course of 1942, there was a series of developments which suggested that significant reforms from the government were a serious possibility. A speech by Smuts to the SAIRR led Umteteli to carry an article by Ballinger under the headline: "Prime Minsiter repudiates segregation policy".⁶⁶ The Smit Committee reported,⁶⁷ and amongst its recommendations were included the abolition of the pass laws, and the inclusion of Africans within the Industrial Conciliation Act (ICA). Smit also called for the abolition of the economic colour bar. And Smit had reported to a delegation from the NRC that there would be no enforcement of the pass laws, unless the individual was suspected of committing a crime.⁶⁸ Writing to Ballinger, Smuts promised that African workers would be included within the framework of the ICA.⁶⁹ In November Madeley opened the CNETU conference, indicating that there was a possibiltiy of government registration being opened up to black unions.⁷⁰ Earlier in the year, the *Guardian* had carried a front-page article under the headline "Thank You Mr. Madeley".⁷¹ The article reported that Madeley had convinced the rest of the Cabinet to support the recognition of African trade unions.

The apparent reformist climate did not change the reality of war-time production for the increasing numbers of black workers, and the social conditions facing the growing concentrations of workers in the urban areas. The immediate meaning of the war was soaring inflation, deteriorating living conditions, and harsher working conditions for the majority of those workers with jobs. Shortly after war was declared there was a march of striking black miners from Vereeniging to Johannesburg.⁷² In the same

period, there was a strike of sugar mill workers in Natal.⁷³ In May 1940, a major garment workers' strike in Johannesburg was successful in winning wage increases.⁷⁴ Later in the year, there was an unsuccessful strike of Rustenburg tobacco workers (led by Johanna Cornelius).⁷⁵ In May 1941, the Guardian reported victory in a wages strike by black miners which, it said, was organised by the Johannesburg Commercial and Distributive Workers Union.⁷⁶ Against the background of the broader process of resurgence which we have seen, these strikes reflect a growing combativity, accelerated by the impact of war conditions. In the same period, the divisions between the unions of black workers were partly resolved,⁷⁷ and the African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU)⁷⁸ and the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU)⁷⁹ were formed. In both of these cases, the CP played a major role, and CP members were in leading positions within both unions from their formation.⁸⁰

In 1940, Gordon was arrested as an opponent of the war effort. The impact of his arrest on the Joint-Committee Unions proved to be considerable, and there was a marked drop in the numbers paying union subscriptions.⁸¹ At a conference in Johannesburg in December 1941, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) was formed, drawing together the former Co-ordinating Committee unions, and a weakened Joint Committee. 32 Unions were represented at the conference which was reported as being "almost entirely free from those regrettable signs of disharmony which have so often interfered with the work of the African trade unions in Johannesburg and the Reef".⁸² It was to become clear,

however, that there remained basic differences between those leaders from, or influenced by, the CP, and those influenced by Gordon.⁸³ For the meantime, however, the organisational unity achieved by the formation of CNETU provided the possibility of a stronger organisational framework through which the resurgence of the workers' movement could potentially be expressed.

In February 1940, largely on the initiative of Sachs, a trade union rally was held in Johannesburg to unite wage demands. A Trade Union Council of Action was set up to "ginger up the trade union movement".⁸⁴ At the TLC conference in March 1940 there was considerable opposition to the pro-war position of the leadership. Sachs moved an anti-war resolution which was defeated by the narrow margin of 23 to 30.⁸⁵ Within the Cape Federation, there was also wide opposition to the pro-war position of the leadership, and in the elections of May 1941, the President (Stuart), Vice-President and the Secretary were all defeated by candidates backed by the left. These results promoted a deep division within the Cape Federation, with Stuart being accused of efforts to form a rival federation.⁸⁶ Divisions within the Cape federation and the SATLC were also reflected on the 1941 Factories Bills which, amongst other things, legislated for workplace segregation. It was supported by the leaderships of both federations, but opposed in public meetings by the left.⁸⁷ The support of the leadership for the Bill led Andrews to comment: "Dictatorship is coming to this country in seven-league boots, the workers have not been sold - they have been given away."⁸⁸

These developments reflect the considerable turmoil and flux amongst wide layers of black and white workers, and within their organisations. In the course of 1942/43 developments within the workers' movement were to be led onto a new level by a sustained wave of spontaneous strikes by black industrial workers. In September 1942, a Wage Board determination affecting 47,000 workers in 34 industries was published. It set a minimum wage level of 25s a week.⁸⁹ The Smit report had set the poverty datum line for an average urban African family at 37/6 per week.⁹⁰ The wage being demanded by CNETU at this time was 40/- per week.⁹¹ Between September 1942 and February 1943 there were 19 recorded strikes on the Witwatersrand, mainly focussing on the issue of wages.⁹²

Against the background outlined here concerning attempts at social engineering, the Smit proposals, and gestures such as Madeley attending the CNETU conference, were aimed at winning the support of the petty bourgeoisie and the working class organisations for the war effort, and making the servicing of capital's labour requirements more efficient. Where workers showed, through their action, that they were more concerned with immediate material reforms than talk about reforms, that talk was subsumed beneath repression. Attempts to win support for the war effort through talk of reform were very quickly replaced by attempts to enforce support for the war effort by enforcing continued production. Legislation to that effect had entailed War Measure 9, which prohibited strikes in essential industries.⁹³ Its

scope was massively extended through the introduction of War Measure 145 which, in response to the strike wave, made all strikes by black workers illegal in all circumstances.⁹⁴

There is a temptation, using simple logic, to explain the reform proposals as due to the liberal, or strategically far-sighted, elements within the state, and the repression as due to the illiberal elements, or those who could not see the value of a plan for co-optation. But the reality was different, even though there may indeed have been individuals within the state machine who fitted into one or the other of those categories. In the actual dynamics of the class struggle it was one thing to talk about reforms, holding them out as a medium term possible reward for disciplined support of the war effort. It was entirely another thing to be confronted by a growing level of working class mobilisation, which not only threatened to immediately disrupt the war effort, but also demanded reforms which related more directly to workers' immediate needs - and showed a capacity to develop action in order to force the state to grant those reforms.

Two features of the strike movement, which continued into 1943 with a strike by power workers, stand out, and go hand in hand. The first is the wide range of workers, in different industries, who took action on the same or similar demands, over a concentrated time period. The second is the way in which, despite this, the groups of workers who did take action remained,

in large part, isolated from each other. One group followed the next into action which was objectively linked into a common movement, but not through conscious organisation. There can be no doubt that the unions and the petty bourgeois organisations not only failed to try to promote the action and build such links, but, on the contrary, actively attempted to restrict it.⁹⁵ This was the only possible course of action for those who placed their support for the war effort above all else; similarly, for those who believed that indisciplined action by workers would upset what they believed was a consistent improvement in their own relations with the state. The report of the Lansdowne Commission made this clear:

"The Commission appreciates the discretion and moderation which characterise Mr Makabeni's submission of the case for workers, and there can be no doubt that in the troublesome negotiations of December 1942, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions of which he was Chairman, wisely exerted its influence to restrain excessive demands and induce the workers to suspend further action pending the determination of their claims after inquiry by a Commission."⁹⁶

The policies and propaganda of the CP, in relation to the strikes and in the period following the change of policy generally, reflect a combination of the impact of the militancy to which they were responding, and the restrictions imposed on that response by the policy priority of support for the war effort. The Central Committee issued a statement on 25 May 1942 which lays out the Party's position. The statement "urges" that "Non-

Europeans ... be given the right to bear arms, that they ... be allowed facilities to train as skilled workers, that their standard of living, health services, housing conditions, and educational facilities ... be raised to the level of the European section of the population." The statement also makes clear the support of the Party for the war effort: "We support the Government in all measures that promote the war effort." The demands which are made "are not only essentially democratic proposals, they are also of primary importance to South Africa's future and the immediate problem of achieving victory over the enemy".⁹⁷ Freedom approvingly quoted the Guardian:

"The workers must become the driving force behind the whole-hearted war effort, and its most vigilant guarantors. Their contribution is to bring about the greatest possible production of goods required for the war." The Party repeated in 1942 the argument which had been rejected at the conference of 1940:

"We realise that the Government is a capitalist government which stands for the existing system of exploitation and national oppression But by attacking the Government except for omissions and weaknesses in its war policy, we would weaken the war effort and strengthen the hands of the pro-Nazi element."⁹⁸

In October, as the strike wave began to develop, an Emergency Committee was set up by CNETU.⁹⁹ It held two rallies, focussing on the demand for a minimum wage of 40 - per week. As in the case of the May statement from the Party, the demands are made, but no clear proposals about how they should be won is put forward. The

Guardian report of the CNETU conference, held at the end of 1942 in the midst of the strike wave, includes the wage demand, but no discussion of the strikes, or how the demand should be achieved.¹⁰⁰

A combination of its policies and the actual course of events created difficulties for the Party. Workers' demands were supported; any obstruction of the war effort was opposed. But thousands of workers were pursuing their demands by taking strike action which disrupted the war effort. The way in which the Party responded to this situation reflected the further shift in the changed policy after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. It is no longer the case that the struggle for workers' demands is seen as the way to defeat fascism. Increasingly, the way to defeat fascism is seen as military victory over Germany. Through this shift, the Party prioritised support for the war effort ahead of the struggle by workers for their immediate day-to-day demands. In a Comintern statement, endorsed by the CPSA, issued on 15 May 1943, the priority is made clear:

"In the countries of the Anti-Hitlerite Coalition, it is the sacred duty of the broadest masses [sic] of the people and first and foremost of the progressive workers, to support in every way the war efforts of the governments of those countries - aimed at the speediest destruction of the Hitlerite bloc...."¹⁰¹

It also directed its propaganda not primarily at the workers taking action and making the demands, but at the government and "progressives" - explaining why the government should, in its own interests, accede to workers' demands. The Party continued to make, promote and support these demands. But its policy

priorities placed it in a position in which it opposed the action which workers took to secure those demands.

The combination of these different positions is reflected in the **Guardian** report of the 1943 Party conference,¹⁰² and in a statement which the Party issued in October 1942. The statement argued that:

"The steady increase in the cost of living is imposing an intolerable burden upon great numbers of low paid workers.... Unless steps are taken to ease the position of the workers further strikes must be expected at a time when every effort should be made to expand production of essential goods to the utmost limit." (For essential, read essential to the war effort.) The statement continues to make it clear that it is the self-interest of the government in promoting the war effort, not the action or needs of workers, which should lead to demands being met. In the midst of a strike wave the absence of any clear support for the strikes, or any calls to action from workers, as opposed to the government, is notable.¹⁰³ In a further statement, on 31 December 1942, the Party declared its opposition to War Measure 145. The statement comes closer than any other to issuing a call to action, appealing to "the organised workers" (sic) to "press" demands on the government and employers. The demands made are for wage increases, the inclusion of Africans under the Industrial Conciliation Act, and the repeal of the War Measure. The statement repeats a part of the October statement, reiterating the Party's call for "full and uninterrupted

mobilisation of all labour resources".¹⁰⁴ The Guardian reported that the main industrial discussion at the 1943 conference was "the position of African workers and the recent strikes by Africans in industry. While deploring any stoppage in work which might hinder the war effort, delegate after delegate pointed to the abominable pay and conditions of the African workers."¹⁰⁵

All the policy statements of the Party in this period follow the same pattern - demands are made, but they are directed as calls upon the government - not as calls to action. Repeatedly, the demands are justified because the failure to meet them threatens the war effort. In the conception of the Party, it is clear that spontaneous (or organised) strike action to pursue those demands also threatens the war effort.¹⁰⁶ The Party called for the establishment of Joint Production Committees, declaring that "[i]t is scandalous to hear stories of workers slacking and of employers who are concerned only with increasing their profits".¹⁰⁷ On the basis of this approach, when action does develop, the demands are supported, but the action taken to win them is opposed. The Party demands the right to strike, but is opposed to the use of that right.¹⁰⁸

There can be no doubt that the strikes of 1942/43 brought to the surface the developments within the workers' movement in the preceding period which this study has been pointing to. Equally, at the point at which that process of resurgence expressed itself in wide-spread class action, there can be no doubt that it was neither strengthened nor even supported by the leadership of

either the unions or the petty bourgeois nationalist organisations. The resurgence developed spontaneously and emerged spontaneously. When it did so, it was not led out and strengthened by the petty bourgeois organisations, nor by the unions which existed. Rather, it confronted these organisations as obstacles, which sought to "restrain demands and suspend further action". The reason why they combined in doing this had little to do with tactical assessments of the strength of the workers' movement - which, in any event, neither the petty bourgeoisie nor the union leadership could properly assess. It had to do with the fact that, for different reasons, both the petty bourgeois organisations and the union leaderships were intent on supporting the war effort. In the way that we have seen, the CP also put support for the war effort as its priority. It was also therefore concerned to ensure that workers did not take action. It promoted the belief, shared by the ANC leadership, that reforms could be won in return for co-operation in promoting the war effort. The difference is that the Party was sometimes more assertive in demanding the reforms, although it consistently opposed action which disrupted the war effort to win them. Xuma in fact expressed concern that the "Communists will steal our thunder",¹⁰⁹ as far as policy on the war was concerned. A wide gap existed, therefore, between the spontaneous vitality and strength of the resurgence in the workers' movement, and the political priorities of the petty bourgeoisie and the union and CP leaderships. With this role being played by the union leaders and the leaders of the political opposition, given the level of

state repression, the spontaneous militancy of the workers was not in itself enough to carry the strike movement consistently forward. It nonetheless became the dominant factor shaping the further development of class action; becoming a central influence on political developments within the petty bourgeoisie; and ushering in a period in which the unions developed to membership levels never before reached.

Strike action continued into 1943. In January, 500 miners struck.¹¹⁰ A mass meeting of workers in the steel industry called for strike action. But the workers were restrained from such action by a leadership which "supports the war and aims to prevent all strikes and stoppages"¹¹¹ In February, power workers took protest action, and their wage demand was referred to the Witwatersrand Mine Native Wages Commission.¹¹² In the course of 1943, 7,400 black workers were on strike; the 1944 figure was 12,000. This compares with a figure of 12,800 in 1942.¹¹³ There was a relatively high level of strike action through the whole period. But at no later stage did such action repeat the strike wave, concentrated in time and geography at the end of 1942/ beginning of 1943. When the power workers did take strike action, at the beginning of 1944, the state was better prepared, and the strike was isolated. The strike was defeated when the leadership agreed to a return to work on behalf of their members, without consultation, after a massive show of police and army strength.¹¹⁴ In the same period, workers continued to join the unions in unprecedented numbers.¹¹⁵ And there was also a significant development of broadly based community struggles.

Action in the community can be undertaken by sections of the working class - notably the unemployed and youth - which do not have industrial strength - and therefore do not experience trials of industrial strength in the same way as industrial workers. State plans were to ensure that the working class communities were centres for disorganisation - for example, through the maintenance of different tribal areas. There was, however, a set

of factors which could serve to weld working class communities together. The basis for this was the common oppression which the state imposed. On many issues, it was within the community framework that the system of repression was acted out - for example, the pass laws, and the associated permit systems operating in the municipal areas.

Pass law raids had potentially contradictory results. On the one hand, they served to isolate the individual, and divide communities between "legals" and "illegals". On the other hand, they could provoke a united reaction in two different ways. Firstly, the raid was carried out within a specified area with common brutality for all those within that area within a specified time, whether they had passes or not. Secondly, there had to be developed an extremely effective informal organised network to warn of pass raids and to help those without passes escape them. In different political circumstances, this network could change from something which helped the atomised individual to escape a personal attack into an informal organisation through which a more generalised resistance to the common attacks was organised.

Aspects of traditional social organisation could similarly change as far as their political meaning was concerned within the urban areas. On the one hand, those aspects served to carry barriers to working class identity and organisation from the rural areas to the towns. On the other, they could become communal activities

which, when attacked, evoked a communal response. An example which serves to illustrate this is brewing.¹¹⁶ Traditionally, brewing is "woman's work". In the towns, brewing took on a different meaning. Firstly, it was one of the few ways available to women to actually earn money.¹¹⁷ Secondly, the fact that it was traditionally performed collectively was changed from meaning a common oppression of doing "woman's work", to a collective target for state attack. When the state acted against brewing in the towns, it was therefore acting against something which was often a matter of economic life and death for women, and something in which women worked together collectively. In this situation, attacks against brewing could, and sometimes did, provoke a united resistance. So, despite the conscious attempts of the state to maintain discipline and divide the working class communities, the very process of seeking to do that could sometimes provoke a united response.¹¹⁸ Segregation meant that every single aspect of life and death for every single individual in the towns was acted out in the same confined space, under generally common economic conditions, with a generally uniform oppression being imposed on all.

As has been pointed out, war-time inflation and the lack of social services in the towns could only serve to deepen grievances and heighten social tension. In 1943, these pressures led to a bus boycott in Alexandra township which, in the conditions of a resurgent workers' movement, drew together almost the whole community, and came to serve as a national focal point of struggle. Mokonyane, describing the struggle in Alexandra,

writes that to the "penury" facing blacks "was added the impossible demands of wartime inflation which made deep incisions into the very sinews, blood and marrow of the African worker, even whilst he was called to lay down his life for 'freedom for all'".¹¹⁹ An attempt to increase fares from 4d to 5d led to a spontaneous nine-day bus boycott which forced the bus companies to withdraw the increase.¹²⁰ The Government appointed a Commission to investigate the matter.¹²¹ Its report captures a part of the reality of life for black workers:

"The worker is compelled to live far away from his work, and must in most cases pay his transport to and from work. The tax must be paid, or he may find himself in gaol.... [The workers] save on food and most are in a state of hunger. Continuous life and work in confined space and often impure air takes its toll of the workers' strength - their sole capital - and their children's lives. And most families appear to be burdened with debt."¹²²

Before the report of the Commission was published, an emergency regulation increased the fare to 5d. In November 1944, a second boycott began, this time for 7 weeks.¹²³ At the end of December 1944 the City Council proposed a compromise, the effect of which was to allow workers to travel at the old 4d price.¹²⁴

During the course of 1944, on the basis of a combination of the same factors which generated the Alexandra boycotts, and the pressure of an acute housing shortage and appalling living conditions, a massive movement of homeless workers developed around Orlando.¹²⁵ Mokonyane describes the conditions in Orlando as

a "miasma of chill stygian darkness, poverty and squalor, disease and death":

"The location had simply become supersaturated with human beings. Some thousands of them, men, women and children camped on a vacant municipal ground nearby. They built themselves shelters of sticks, sacking, old tins and maize. Thousands of other homeless people came to join them. Thus came into being the Orlando Shanties - Masakeng (at the shacks). They were led by James Mpanza under the slogan 'Sofasonke' (We will die together)."¹²⁶

The Sofasonke movement was successful to an extent, in that it succeeded in protecting "illegal squatters" for a period. There can be no doubt that the three major issues involved in these struggles - prices, housing, and the pass laws - were issues facing the whole working class. Nor can there be any doubt that the basis for the struggles which developed in Alexandra and Orlando was also present, or potentially present, in many other working class communities.

While groups of workers were heading towards the action discussed above, both the ANC and the CP were going through phases of growth. For the first time, the ANC was being extended out of the group of traditional leaders, and was becoming a genuine representative of wide layers of the petty bourgeoisie.¹²⁷ Between 1941 and 1943 the membership of the CP more than trebled.¹²⁸ In some ways, the Party was gaining a new legitimacy.¹²⁹ According to a *Guardian* editorial at the beginning of 1943, "people are not so frightened by the word 'Communist' these days. The Communists who are driving the Nazis before them in Leningrad and in the Caucasus are opening many minds". A Consular representative from the Soviet Union arrived in 1942. Dr. Colin Steyn, the Minister of Justice, released two Communists who had been detained, and became a patron of the Friends of the Soviet Union.¹³⁰ Mrs Smuts, wife of the Prime Minister, became a patron of Medical Aid for Russia.¹³¹ White Communists were elected as members of the Johannesburg and Cape Town City Councils.¹³² Communists continued to hold influential positions within the white trade unions,¹³³ and gained new positions of influence within the ANC, particularly in the Transvaal.¹³⁴ Inside the ANC, Xuma took executive measures to consolidate his influence within the organisation¹³⁵ and assert discipline in the Transvaal and Cape congresses.¹³⁶ The ANC continued to focus on the NRC, and in the 1942 NRC elections seven of the 16 elected members were declared ANC supporters.¹³⁷

Both the CP and the ANC had pursued variations of the argument that segregation and oppressive measures should be abolished,

because these were not in the **government's** interests. For a period, as we have seen, it appeared that there was some willingness within the government to respond to the argument. As the response to Madeley's talk of recognition for black trade unions demonstrates,¹³⁸ the Party began to read into the situation a new reformist sincerity from the government. This political vision was consistent with the Peoples Front approach - but not with the actual situation. Through its attitude to the reformist talk, the Party actually promoted a vision of a reforming government which was not dissimilar to the liberal vision amongst elements within the black petty bourgeoisie. The liberal vision on a world-scale was codified in the Atlantic Charter.¹³⁹ In South Africa, the extent of its influence on elements within the black petty bourgeoisie could be seen in the document "African Claims", produced by the ANC under Xuma's guidance.¹⁴⁰

In the first phase of the war period, the petty bourgeoisie had seemed able to deliver important support for the government war effort. There had been a relative freedom within which the black petty bourgeoisie had been allowed to operate. But the conditions which created that situation were transient. In 1943, changes in the war situation,¹⁴¹ the impact of the strike wave, and the pressure from Afrikaner Nationalists¹⁴² collectively put an end even to the suggestion of reforms. The first step had already been taken, in the repressive measures taken to suppress the strike movement. This was followed by a massive pass arrest campaign.¹⁴³ Proposals were tabled to restrict the property rights of Indians;¹⁴⁴ a Coloured Affairs Department, on the model of the

Native Affairs Department, was established in 1943, in order to organise the segregation and other measures applying to Coloureds.¹⁴⁵ Two sections of the black petty bourgeoisie were under direct attack; and with the proposed measures in relation to Coloureds and Indians came the threat of further segregation measures in relation to Africans.

As the 1943 elections approached,¹⁴⁶ the room for manoeuvre of the government was being restricted. The government was under pressure from the Nationalists, who were beginning to extend their influence, although in a limited way, amongst key groups in the social base of the ruling class.¹⁴⁷ Despite the dissipation of the strike wave, workers had signalled that renewed mass action was an ongoing possibility. The government had to seek a balance between repressive measures, and the problem of provoking a mass reaction to those measures. The workers' movement was not able to seize the initiative because it was not well enough organised, because its leadership could not regard that as a priority while there was the war effort to support, and because spontaneity in itself was not enough to drive the movement forward consistently. But neither was the government in a position in which it could simply choose and implement any programme in relation to the black petty bourgeoisie and black workers. Each option brought with it the possibility of growing opposition from some significant quarter.

This was a situation in which the petty bourgeoisie was coming

under pressure from both major classes. Major political questions were being opened up: Would support for the war effort continue, if the government was going to launch attacks against the petty bourgeoisie? Would the attacks against Indians and Coloureds promote a drive for a broader black unity? Would the demands of workers in struggle be supported? Did the threatened attacks mean that the policy of concessions through alliance was not viable? How would resistance be articulated? What programme of action and demands would be pursued? The constraints facing both the workers' movement and the government created a temporary stalemate, in which the petty bourgeoisie was relatively free to respond in its own way to those pressures. There followed a massive wave of organisation, re-organisation and renewed organisation within the petty bourgeoisie, as different elements within it grappled with the political questions which they saw before them. Within a short period the AAC was partially revived, the revival already underway in the ANC was taken forward, and several new organisations were formed - all in 1943: The African Democratic Party (ADP); the Congress Youth League (CYL); the Transkei Organised Bodies (TOB); the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), and the Anti-CAD.

The ADP arose directly on the basis of the mass action of 1942/43, and especially the Alexandra bus boycott, which had been fought and won in August 1943. The Party was officially inaugurated in September 1943, and came to be dominated by Paul Mosaka, an NRC member, and Hymie Basner, a former Communist, and Native Member of the Senate.¹⁴⁸ An added impetus for the emergence

of the Party was the administrative decision, taken by Xuma, to cancel ANC elections in the Transvaal.¹⁴⁹ The effect of this was to remove the possibility of youth militants winning control of the Transvaal Congress. Some of the militants who were at the receiving end of this decision stayed in the ANC and formed the Youth League.¹⁵⁰ Self Mampuru, who had been the militants' key candidate, and others left, and were involved in the formation of the ADP.¹⁵¹ The genesis of the ADP can thus be traced to the general resurgence of the workers' movement, and the limitations with which the CP and the ANC related to the action which developed. The CP recognised a part of this reality when it wrote of the formation of the ADP: "[T]his Party could not have been born in [sic] the Congress leaders had organised the people, mobilised them in their millions...."¹⁵²

The ADP rejected what it described as "the extremes" of the "Method of Revolt", and "The Policy of Appeasement", adopting what it called the "Method of Peaceful Revolution".¹⁵³ This was "the method of the STRIKE used as the weapon of TRADE UNIONS throughout the world - it is the method of MASS PROTESTS and MASS DEMONSTRATIONS such as brought victory to the residents of Alexandra Township in their recent Bus dispute." In its general call for strike action, the ADP Manifesto moved beyond the CP and ANC policies of opposition to disruption of the war effort. The Manifesto included general statements on a post-war world which "will end [the misery of the masses] and set their feet on the paths of peace and progress".¹⁵⁴ But it contained no clear

statement of policy on the war effort. The likelihood is that amongst its leadership there were differing positions. The Manifesto committed the ADP to the "the struggle for economic emancipation" of Africans, and to "the struggle for a share of political power". It made demands for a fair distribution of land, a living wage, educational facilities, the abolition of the industrial colour bar, and of the Pass Laws. As Inkululeko pointed out, these were not new demands.¹⁵⁵ What was new, however, was the extent of the political movement within the petty bourgeoisie in the quest for political answers. The formation of the ADP reflected that movement. As its manifesto indicated, at its foundation, the party had not yet provided firm and clear answers to the questions which promoted its formation.

According to the Manifesto, the Method of Peaceful Revolution "require[d] for its success intelligent and disciplined leadership and the undivided loyalty and co-operation of the masses". All over the world, the "masses of unprivileged humanity" were "look[ing] to men of vision, learning and authority".¹⁵⁶ The conception which key ADP leaders had of the mass movement, and the way in which they related to it, was empiricist. When the resurgence of the workers' movement had not yet come to the fore, Mosaka was part of the petty bourgeois accommodation to the NRC structure set up by the state, and Basner was, without any trace of open opposition, arguing the CP position. When the resurgence came to the surface, they, and others like them, were shifted by it. Out of the mass movement, when it existed empirically, they saw developing an upward spiral

of militant action which needed radical propaganda and the leadership of "men of vision, learning and authority" to speed its development. The opposite side of the empiricist coin which idealises the militancy of the masses in this way is the belief that "the masses are passive" when there is no longer empirical evidence of mass militancy. This can lead to a range of different political options, ranging from a retreat from politics in complete demoralisation, to ultra-left adventurism. Any organisation which is produced out of a mass movement and a wave of mass action cannot automatically be sustained. Either it has to be able to relate to the **dynamic** of the workers' movement, being able to understand and connect with the real ebbs and flows in the struggle, and the real rhythm of developments within that movement. Or it will inevitably be forced towards organisational and political measures which start distancing it from the real movement of the workers. In the case of the ADP, the latter option was the one which applied. When the mass action upon which it had in part emerged did not develop in that upward spiral, the organisation began to fall apart.¹⁵⁷

It was within the ANC that there was to be the greatest **flexibility** in the approach of the petty bourgeoisie to the masses, and it was in that organisation, in part through its flexibility, that the greatest organisational stability was going to be provided for the petty bourgeoisie. A decision of the 1942 ANC conference made provision for the establishment of an ANC Youth League.¹⁵⁸ The 1943 conference took the decision to establish

such a League.¹⁵⁹ This formalised a situation in which an organised group of youth had already been functioning and active around the campaign to have Self Mampuru elected as Transvaal ANC president.¹⁶⁰ Even without the resurgence of the workers' movement there were strong pressures for a decisive change in the leadership of the ANC. The growth of the social weight of the urban working class had been accompanied with the growth of the weight of the urban petty bourgeoisie within the petty bourgeoisie as a whole. And within the urban petty bourgeoisie, a new layer of professionals, comprising in particular teachers and lawyers, had developed.¹⁶¹ This layer began to replace, in terms of numbers and social prestige, the handful of clerics, professors and doctors who had traditionally dominated the organisations of the petty bourgeoisie.¹⁶² This new layer of the urban petty bourgeoisie lacked the personal and professional ties of the traditional leaders with white liberals;¹⁶³ they began to organise in part as an opposition to the tradition of seeking to win demands through that connection; they came under the pressure of the resurgent workers' movement which had emerged through action all around them; they were caught up in the general ideological turmoil, and the social problems sharpened by the war. In these conditions, this increasingly significant layer of the petty bourgeoisie began to assert a political identity and organise. The Congress Youth League, they declared, "must be the brains-trust and power-station of the spirit of African Nationalism".¹⁶⁴ Co-operation with other blacks and progressive organisations could come only when Africans were "an organised self-conscious [sic] unit."¹⁶⁵ In 1948 A P Mda, one of the CYL founders, explained that it had been

founded "in order to strengthen the National Movement, and give youth scope for training as the future leaders of the people."¹⁶⁶

The ideology of the CYL reflected a self-confidence and self-assertion, embodied in the declaration of their Manifesto: "[The African] NOW ELECTS TO DETERMINE HIS FUTURE BY HIS OWN EFFORTS."¹⁶⁷

This was in part directed at what was seen as the self-humbling moderation of the traditional leaders in relation to the white liberals and the state. The League members clearly shared some of the criticisms of the Congress leadership which they attributed to the ADP.

"The critics of Congress attribute the inability of Congress in the last twenty years to advance the national cause in a manner commensurate with the demands of the times, to weaknesses in its organisation and constitution; to its erratic policy of yielding to oppression, regarding itself as a body of gentlemen with clean hands and failing to see the problems of the African through the proper perspective."¹⁶⁸

The Manifesto declared that some of these and other criticisms of the Congress leadership were founded on fact. "It is admitted that in the process of our development, our leadership made certain blunders. It was inevitable that this should have been the case, encompassed as the African people were and still are with forces inimical to their progress."¹⁶⁹

The first political task which the Youth League set itself was to pursue its own political development, and then to win support for

its ideas amongst other elements of the elite. Part of the self-assertive African nationalism of the League was a rejection of "foreign leadership of Africa".¹⁷⁰ Ngubane has written that "[t]he intention was to establish a pressure group inside the ANC".¹⁷¹ Walshe points out that the "CYL was not an attempt at a mass youth movement, and settled down with a core membership of approximately sixty."¹⁷² The task of the League was to rise above the forces "inimical to African progress", and prepare itself for leadership. Karis and Carter point out that "the manifesto did not tell leadership what to do but what to be: 'the personification and symbol of popular aspirations and ideals'".¹⁷³ It had to "combat moral disintegration among Africans by maintaining and upholding high ethical standards ourselves".¹⁷⁴ The League identified the task of "rousing popular political consciousness", and declared that it would "educate the people politically".¹⁷⁵ Consistently with the priority of developing the type of leadership which the League envisaged, the masses were to be politicised once the preparation within the elite had been accomplished.

The AAC met in emergency conference in 1941. Despite previous positions for a boycott of Hertzog Bill elections, and the presence of an organised radical faction, the conference endorsed a slate for the forthcoming elections for Native Parliamentary Representatives and NRC members.¹⁷⁶ In the period before the strike wave, the political pressure on different sections of the petty bourgeoisie to focus on the NRC was considerable. It was the single organised forum, acceptable to the government, through

which a relationship with the government could be structured by the petty bourgeoisie. Particularly where some elements of the petty bourgeoisie had started operating in the forum - apparently increasing their own political prestige in the process - there was pressure created on other elements to make sure that they were not excluded. This pressure was increased when the talk of reforms developed - and was directed at the NRC.

Between the 1941 conference and the next scheduled conference in 1943 there was no major meeting of the AAC. The organisation was effectively divided between a layer of leadership whose politics would be determined by the policies of the ANC, and a group of radicals with a limited regional base. In 1942/43, the urban petty bourgeoisie from which the CYL was to be formed were surrounded by the strike movement, and faced the ongoing question of their relationship to the established regional and national ANC leadership. For the radicals within the AAC, the situation was different. Their main location was in the Transkei,¹⁷⁷ where the traditional ANC and social leaders had been chiefs, not the petty bourgeois professionals who made up the Transvaal and national leadership of the ANC. To this group in the Transkei was attached a group based in Cape Town.¹⁷⁸ But the latter had little or no base within the working class in the Cape industrial areas, and turned to the base which their co-thinkers had in the Transkei. Not surprisingly, a majority within this group came to hold the view that the primary question in the struggle overall was the land question.¹⁷⁹ The view had been expressed clearly by the Workers' Party of South Africa, a grouping whose members were influential

within the AAC and then the NEUM.

"[T]he Native Problem is mainly the Agrarian Problem. In a country predominantly agricultural where 95% of the population is rural, the axis of the revolution revolves around the agrarian problem which is the alfa and omega of the revolution The Native needs first of all land and then national emancipation. The national question is not the fundamental problem of our revolution: the agrarian question is and will remain the basic task."¹⁸⁰

During the course of 1943, the Western Province section of the AAC issued the pamphlet "Calling All Africans".¹⁸¹ This section was dominated by the radicals within the AAC, the same radical element which was active within the framework of the TOB. The central thrust of this pamphlet was to call for unity under the AAC.

In December 1943, a preliminary unity conference launched the Non-European Unity Movement. This drew together the Anti-CAD, which had been set up to oppose the Smuts segregation proposals relating to Coloureds, and the AAC, with a small group of Coloured radicals linked to the radicals within the TOB, providing the link between the two. The NEUM produced the Ten Point Programme, containing generally the same democratic and civil liberty demands as were propagated by the TOB. The NEUM was

portrayed as representing the organic unity of "the oppressed people".¹⁸² A letter from Tabata to Mandela shows the vision of the NEUM leadership:

"The African people spontaneously created the ALL-AFRICAN CONVENTION. The political exigencies of the time and the crisis (of the new slave Bills) forced the people to organise on a nation-wide scale. So without any premeditated theory the people spontaneously gave birth to a form of organisation which could knit together a whole people into a single compact unit, a fighting force. The predominant idea at the time was **unity**. This was one higher political level Mutual antagonisms and rivalry were replaced by the spirit of co-operation. The leader who jealously guarded his personal position was replaced by a unified leadership and petty sectional interests gave way to a form of thought which embraced the whole race....

"I know that you [Mandela] have often wondered why we [the NEUM] are so intransigent and yet we say we want unity.... The truth of the matter is that we are defending a position which was conquered by the African people in 1935."¹⁸³

In the years that followed, the Unity Movement emphasised the programme as the minimum **principled** position, and non-collaboration with government institutions as the minimum principled tactic. This set of minimum principles was repeatedly invoked to explain differences with other organisations which in fact shared similar basic democratic demands. On the land question - the key issue for the NEUM - its programme called for a redistribution of the land as "the first task of a democratic

state and Parliament." The basis on which this redistribution was to take place was made clear by G.H. Gool, a leading NEUM figure. "When we drafted this point of the 10 Point Programme we took it for granted that it could mean one thing only: the right to own land, to buy land, and to hire land."¹⁸⁴ As Blair points out, this approach led to the charge, from other Cape radicals, that the NEUM's programme identified it as having an aspirant petty bourgeois leadership.¹⁸⁵

The perspective of the NEUM followed a pattern which was not dissimilar to the ADP, with which it had some contact. The difference was that, over time, it was not the workers, but the rural masses whose visible militancy promoted an idealisation of the masses. In 1943, the radicals who were central to the formation of the NEUM became active in the newly-formed Transkei Organised Bodies. This brought together in an unstable federation the chiefs, the Transkei Voters Association, various welfare organisations, and two women's organisations.¹⁸⁶ The main activity of the TOB was in advocating general civil rights reforms. In 1945 and 1946, the situation in this area was changed dramatically. The Rehabilitation Scheme was launched in the Transkei with measures such as stock-culling, fencing, and removals.¹⁸⁷ These measures generally had the support of the chiefs, who were sometimes active in their enforcement. A massive wave of opposition, directed mainly at the chiefs, was unleashed. The radical petty bourgeoisie within the Transkei thus faced conditions of struggle which had their own rhythm - different to

that which was operating in the urban industrial areas - that in itself promoted an organisational and political response which was in part different to that of the urban petty bourgeoisie in the Transvaal. This difference was further promoted by the fact that the ANC was no longer an appropriate vehicle through which an internal organisational opposition to the chiefs could be conducted. In 1943, the new constitution of the ANC had abolished the Upper House of Chiefs.¹⁸⁸ This was in response to the pressure from the Youth League, in accordance with organisational measures which Xuma was taking to modernise the ANC as the organisation of the urban petty bourgeoisie, and in accordance also with administrative measures he had taken to try to restrict the power of other groups within the ANC.

This situation promoted a tendency, already evident in the radical element of the AAC, to identify the rural masses as the most radical base for an opposition movement. At the same time, in conditions of general ideological turmoil within the petty bourgeoisie, there were ongoing attempts by different elements to win authority within the petty bourgeoisie in general. This promoted the tendency for such groups to cling to "their own" organisational base. It was partly such competition for authority which meant that 1940 AAC/ANC agreement to share authority was never likely to be implemented. A similar agreement was reached between the two organisations in 1943.¹⁸⁹ But while groups within both organisations were still struggling for dominance, and maintaining their own separate support as a weapon in that struggle, it was again likely that it would not be implemented.

Even while political principles and the masses were constantly being invoked - not by the Unity Movement alone - the politics of the petty bourgeoisie, in the period immediately following these organisational developments, was primarily politics within the petty bourgeoisie. The masses were invoked while different petty bourgeois elements were actually defining their political positions, often in relation to, and through opposition with, each other.

In the face of all of this political movement within the petty bourgeoisie, and against the background of the strike wave, the leadership of the ANC reacted to maintain their authority. On one level, this meant manoeuvres and bureaucratic measures - such as the measures taken to postpone elections in the Transvaal, when it looked as if the youth radicals might win them. But the relatively new Xuma leadership was in part subject to the same pressures which were promoting the organisation, self-assertion and development of demands amongst other sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie. Thus it was that, through the new constitution of 1943 and in written programme, the ANC moved substantially, from the proposal to extend democratic rights to a "qualified elite", to the demand for a genuine, all-embracing democracy.¹⁹⁰

This then was a period of considerable organisational development

within the black petty bourgeoisie. Despite the apparent differences and antagonisms between different organisations formed in the period, and the political conflict between them, there were fundamental similarities between them. Not only did they share generally the same democratic demands; essential to the political perspective of the different organisations, only combined and expressed in different ways - were two major political features: firstly, an idealist conception of the masses and the mass struggle; secondly the conviction that the course of events depended on the political leadership given by the petty bourgeoisie.

To identify a common idealist conception of the masses is not to suggest that the organisations were **consciously** formed with that orientation. It was rather a part of the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie which, when that class was left in relative freedom to express its views and interests, could be expected to be contained in the politics which developed. Similarly with the leading role attributed to the petty bourgeoisie: the assertion is not that all the organisations were consciously set up to promote petty bourgeois leadership, nor that they all expressed an open or conscious commitment to it. But rather that essential to their politics and the way in which they went about enacting that politics was the **assumption** that the struggle would depend on the struggle for political dominance within the petty bourgeoisie. This went hand in hand with the idealisation of the masses. These two features were combined in different ways. In the case of the ADP, there was a vision of an upward spiral of

action, at the head of which would be the radical propagandist. For the NEUM/AAC, it involved an idealisation of the rural masses and the belief that a leadership cleansed of collaboration would arouse the masses to new heights. In the case of the CYL, there was the belief that provided a politicised elite was prepared, the masses would respond to political education from that elite. For the ANC leadership, the masses were either seen as undisciplined - or as the potentially disciplined supporters who would provide leaders with a powerful negotiating weapon. Elements of these different approaches, in the real situation, were combined and overlapped. But, in broad terms, they were the approaches adopted and pursued by the ADP, the AAC/Unity Movement, CYL, and the ANC respectively. Clearly, between these approaches there was room for sharp political differences, and disagreements. Developing populist rhetoric in the midst of the masses could lead to clashes with those who were trying to prepare programmes of political education amongst the "politicised elite". A focus on the discontent against the chiefs in the rural areas created different pressures and promoted different responses from a focus on the urban working class. And, together with political differences arising in that way, there was the basis for a range of careerist, opportunist, individualist clashes which could sometimes be expressed through invoking political disagreements and criticisms. But neither disagreements on this basis, nor actual substantive political disagreements displace what are, beneath the surface, common political features.

As these organisational developments, and the political developments which they represented, unfolded, the petty bourgeoisie appeared to be the major political actor; the developments within the petty bourgeoisie appeared to make up the major political process - the movement of the petty bourgeoisie to the left. But, far from taking the political initiative, the petty bourgeoisie was operating within a balance of class forces which it did not recognise, could not itself create and could not itself maintain.

The developments we have considered within the petty bourgeoisie were not the next step forward in the resurgence of the workers' movement. They occurred at a time when there was a descent from the peak reached in the strike wave. The next step forward in the resurgence of the workers' movement would depend - like the first step - on the rising combativity of groups of workers. And the really decisive political process underway was not that of the organisation and developments of the petty bourgeoisie. It was that of the ongoing and renewed development of combativity within the working class.

The organisational developments we have seen within the petty bourgeoisie reflected the attempts to seek and provide political answers, in the aftermath of the strike wave and Alexandra boycott. In the conditions of ideological flux in the petty bourgeoisie at the outset of the war, the CP's initial uncertainty had disqualified it from putting forward clear

answers to the questions being addressed by the organised petty bourgeoisie. By 1943, the Party was able to put forward a clear position on the issue of the war. That position was reflected in its response to the calls by the ADP for a widening of the Alexandra and Orlando struggles. In Orlando Advisory Board elections, Sofasonke and ADP candidates defeated Communists. In its analysis of the reasons for the defeat, the Party demonstrated the continuing, self-imposed constraints of its opposition to disruption of the war effort:

"Mr Mpanza may seem to be a figure hardly worth taking seriously. Yet his 'Shanty Town' movement - however questionable his motives and advice - gave the people what they demanded: something to do about the housing shortage. Similarly, the ADP suffers from all the faults of sectarianism, political inexperience and stupidity. Yet over the train fares issue they had the enormous advantage over our comrades (who are infinitely more advanced politically) that they were advocating something positive - i.e. to boycott the trains - however silly and impractical."¹⁹¹

But the Party was placed under increasing pressure - both by the action of workers, and by the developments within the petty bourgeoisie, to propose some form of action to win demands. In November 1943, the Johannesburg CP set up an anti-pass campaign.¹⁹² In January 1944, a demonstration called by the Campaign was attended by over 2,000 people.¹⁹³ At a conference in May 1944, an Anti-Pass Council was elected, and the leadership of the Campaign broadened, with Xuma becoming Chairman.¹⁹⁴ The campaign raised the same problem which had faced the Party more generally. The demand

for the abolition of the pass laws was clear-cut, and reflected the interests of the mass of workers. But no action in the struggle against the pass laws could be supported if it disrupted the war effort. In a situation where there had been a clear break by the government even from reformist talk, the Party was forced to look for an approach which put pressure on the government, without disrupting the war effort. While a movement of thousands was taking effective action against the pass laws in Orlando, the campaign set its sights on a petition to the government.¹⁹⁵

In August 1944, David Bopape, who was secretary of the campaign, was dismissed from his job as a teacher because of his political role in the campaign. This was met by a general strike in Brakpan, where he lived and worked.¹⁹⁶ If that was the response which could be immediately generated against the victimisation of a leader of the campaign, then the willingness to take action in support of the demands of the campaign, which reflected the needs of workers, must have been very great. An incident in Johannesburg in November served also to demonstrate the combative climate within the workers' movement, the extent to which anger had built up and the extent to which workers were ready to show that anger. When a black was killed by a tram, there were immediate "riots" by workers in the area.¹⁹⁷ An area general strike on the side effects of the campaign and "riots" in reaction to one death - these are clear indicators of the basis which existed within the working class for a broad organised movement. But by March 1945, Mofutsanyana was warning that the basis for the

Campaign was not being exploited:

"It is necessary to point out that after the successful National Conference and demonstrations last year the work of the Anti-Pass Campaign slackened terribly, particularly in the Transvaal. As a matter of fact for some time there were no activities at all.... [T]he fact is that the general activities of the Committee ceased, and enthusiasm demonstrated by the Conference died out. And as a result, the required signatures could not be obtained...."¹⁹⁸

A more comprehensive Party analysis, freed from the constraints of opposition to class action which disrupted the war effort, would have pointed to the way in which the objective opportunities created by working class combativity at the time of the strike wave and community action were also not exploited by the leadership. At the 1944 AMWU conference there were repeated calls from delegates for an organised strike on wages. But these calls were opposed by the leadership,¹⁹⁹ and the possibility of a new front being opened up by a strategically powerful group of workers was lost. Both the strike wave and the community action suffered from the same lack of co-ordination and preparation which Mofutsanyana identified as a problem for the Anti-Pass Campaign. As was the case with the Campaign, the lack of a united, energetic leadership fully in support of the action meant that the potential in the situation could not be fully exploited. In each case, the position which the CP took was dictated by its opposition to any disruption of the war effort.

After the peaks reached in the strike wave and community action, there was a pause in the broader development of class action. In this situation the Anti-Pass Campaign was not being taken forward by either its leadership, or the spontaneous forward drive of workers, and it reached the low point which Mofutsanyana describes.

In the course of 1944, the developments within the petty bourgeoisie continued. In December, the Campaign for Right and Justice was set up, with support from white liberals, the ANC and the CP.²⁰⁰ In 1944, the AAC, which had amended its constitution to allow competition with the ANC for individual membership,²⁰¹ issued "Along the New Road", which called for provincial, district and local branches to be set up.²⁰² The Youth League issued its manifesto.²⁰³ In August, Xuma sent a draft of "Africa Claims" to Smuts.²⁰⁴ A teachers' march in Johannesburg, led by the Transvaal African Teachers Association (with the CYL in influential positions), demanded higher pay and better conditions.²⁰⁵ Xuma became Chairman of the Johannesburg Joint Council, with Tambo joining as a member.²⁰⁶ While all these moves were taking place, the objective basis for the development of a broader, organised struggle continued, largely untapped, undeveloped and unused by the political and union organisations. To the extent that it was developed, this depended primarily on the spontaneous receptivity to organisation and action, which generated the struggles we have seen, promoted the growth of the unions, and laid the basis for the class action which was to follow.

As far as white workers were concerned, the opposition of the majority of their leadership to class action was even more determined than that faced by black workers. After the war, Smuts was to thank the engineering unions for their collaboration:

"The outbreak of the hostilities found the engineering industry faced with many problems, not the least of which was the shortage of skilled artisans, and to overcome this particular difficulty so far as possible it was necessary for the Controller of Industrial Manpower to impose restrictions on the engagement of labour and to take other steps which infringed on the normal freedom of action of employers [sic]. Any major disturbances in the engineering industry would have adversely affected South Africa's contribution to the Allied victory, and the fact that these did not occur must be attributed to the whole-hearted co-operation of employers and employees alike in the interests of the war effort."²⁰⁷

The positions adopted by the unions and the LP, and the economic conditions created by the war, promoted a growing opposition to the policies of the leadership. This was reflected in a series of splits within the LP.²⁰⁸ It also created conditions which the Afrikaner Nationalists, now better organised and more consciously oriented to Afrikaans workers, were able to exploit. In the same period, Afrikaans workers became a significantly larger proportion of whites in skilled and semi-skilled work. In the general elections of 1943, the TLC, the Cape Federation, the LP and the CP all supported the continuation of the governing

popular front. The CP attempted to get agreement for a pro-war electoral alliance with the LP, UP and Dominion Party. When the other parties refused to co-operate, the CP decided to stand its own candidates.²⁰⁹ In the same election, the Herenigde Nasionale of Volksparty (HNP), Afrikaner Party (AP), Nuwe Orde (NO), and Ossewabrandwag (OB) all put forward election propaganda professing a variety of anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist convictions.²¹⁰

In 1945, the anti-pass petition was handed in. Measured against the expectations of reforms aroused during the war, the petition was a failure. Smuts refused to receive the delegation which presented it, indicating the way in which the government would respond to it.²¹¹ The petition had received only a small part of the support which had been hoped for.²¹²

Since 1943, pegging proposals, relating to the acquisition of property by Asians (the "Ghetto Bill") had been on the table.²¹³ This had resulted in the rapid development of an opposition faction - the Anti-Segregation Council - within the Natal Indian Congress (NIC).²¹⁴ In 1945, the opposition succeeded for the first time in winning a majority in the NIC leadership elections and replacing the conservative Kajee leadership.²¹⁵ A Passive Resistance Campaign was launched against the Ghetto Bill.²¹⁶ For the new NIC leadership, facing the threat of further oppressive measures, the pressure existed for a turn towards the rest of the black petty bourgeoisie.²¹⁷ This pressure developed at the time when the ANC leadership was seeing its hopes in the Anti-Pass petition being dashed by the government response. The prospect of reform was clearly receding, and there was the threat all round of further restrictive legislation. Out of this pressure, unity moves started developing between the ANC and the NIC. The CP provided a crucial link in establishing that unity - later to be concretised in the Doctors Pact²¹⁸ - through the person of Dadoo. Political developments within the petty bourgeoisie - stimulated first by the war, then by the resurgence of the workers' movement - were now being accelerated because of the extension of oppressive

legislation and government threats of more such measures.

Meanwhile, within the ANC, the Youth League had been extending its influence. Although, in the course of the war, the CP had become relatively well located within the Transvaal ANC in particular, its position within that organisation was threatened by the concurrent growth of the influence of the CYL. In 1945, the Transvaal ANC accepted a motion, coming from Tambo, Lembede, Mandela and Sisulu which asserted that members of other parties should forfeit their membership of the ANC.²¹⁹ The motion represented the clearest possible challenge to the alliance with the petty bourgeoisie which the CP was trying to build, and for the actual way in which it was seeking to pursue that alliance - support for the ANC. The motion was rejected by the National Conference of the ANC,²²⁰ and, in the short-term, the CP came to owe its continued location within the ANC to the support of some of the more moderate elements within the ANC nationally, against the opposition of the rising militant youth wing.

Part of the basis of the CYL opposition to the CP had arisen from the conservatism of the CP in relation to the strike wave, and to mass action in general. At the Party conference at the end of 1944, with the end of the war in sight, the Party had turned to the issue of its post-war policy. The end of the war would free the Party of the limitations imposed by its support for the war effort. But there were differing approaches as to how the post-war policy should be developed. In particular, there was a

division between those who looked to a continued focus on "the democratic alliance" (which for some, included the UP); and those who believed that the Party should move outside of the Peoples Front framework. The policy document "What Next" represents a partial blend of the two positions. The Peoples Front perspective is retained, but there is also a willingness to call for mass action:

"How is a programme for progress to be put into effect? The answer is through mass pressure and political action by the working class and progressive organisations. The lead must be taken by organised bodies, European and Non-European. The trade unions, The LP, the Communists, the ANC and other national organisations are capable of bringing large sections of the population into action.... [Such a policy] pressed with vigour and persistence will obtain the backing of progressive capitalists and middle class people...."²²¹

The Party leadership was faced with criticism of this approach at the 1944²²² and 1945²²³ conferences. Harry Snitcher is quoted at the 1944 conference as arguing:

"How is our policy as set forth in our pamphlet 'What Next?' going to meet the post-war situation? Some of our comrades describe this pamphlet as "wishy-washy" because it advocates the development of industrialism, the establishment of a national health service, compulsory education for all, and democratic rights for all - because they do not consider it revolutionary in content.... COMRADES, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN TO BE EXTREME ULTRA-

REVOLUTIONARY IS TO BETRAY THE CAUSE FOR WHICH WE ARE WORKING."²²⁴

The Party had considerable difficulty in seeking to pursue the blend of differing positions embodied in "What Next?". At the beginning of 1945, the Party attempted to organise the "People's Covention" which the conference had called for. This was to be a an alliance of the CP, LP, trade unions, and "non-European liberatory organisations". But the preliminary meeting was "a complete flop", and the Party was forced to declare: "It is an obvious fact that the 'progressive forces' are heartily sick of us; and our own comrades too are clearly un-enthusiastic about these efforts to link up with these 'progressive forces' except when they momentarily get scared of the fascist shoutings of the Nationalists". The Party recognised its own confusion of orientation, as it attempted to move beyond the clear lines laid down by support for the war effort: "Browderism caught on so easily. It is our weakness that the Party as a whole has little grasp of its revolutionary function."²²⁵

As will be discussed, the Party did not completely turn its back on the attempt to build an alliance with 'progressive forces', which were later to specifically include parts of the ruling class, and all "non-Nationalist South Africans". But the CP was also ready to support more radical proposals at the 1946 Anti-Pass Campaign conference.²²⁶ The Xuma leadership of the ANC was under pressure to do the same; its war position was made redundant by the situation; it was frustrated by the lack of a return in the form of reforms from the government, moving towards

an alliance with radicalised sections of the Indian petty bourgeoisie, and under pressure from the Youth League militants. For the CYL, the central element in its political approach to the masses was the need to politicise them into action.²²⁷ The second national Anti-pass campaign conference, in June 1946, was the first major political conference after the war, and it reflected a break from the CP and ANC constraints of support for the war effort. The anti-pass campaign had agreed to work on a petition, in conditions where there was a mass movement maturing, a widespread mood of combativity and a mobilised mass struggle against the pass laws. These were conditions in which, as the Brakpan strike indicates, there was a movement in part mobilised around the anti-pass campaign, although not called into action by it. From the same campaign, in 1946, when the strike wave had been dissipated, when two Alexandra bus boycotts had run their course, when the level of spontaneous action was dying down, there now came the proposal to launch a mass struggle, to culminate in pass-burning and a national stoppage within three months.²²⁸

This new radical position from the anti-pass Campaign came not long after CNETU had claimed the greatly increased membership of 150,000.²²⁹ (The joint membership of the Co-ordinating Committee and the Joint Committee at the beginning of the war was a maximum of 23,000).²³⁰ Xuma had given the opening address to the 1945 CNETU conference. Makabeni had been replaced as Secretary General by Marks.²³¹ The immediate post-war situation was one in which the

leadership of the unions was more left-wing, and the ANC and CP had moved to the left; there was a level of political agreement and co-operation between these different organisations. The petty bourgeoisie was better organised than at the outset of the war.²³² The membership of the CP had risen.²³³ The unions were very much larger. There thus seemed to be the organisational and political basis for the mass campaign. Benson talks of the "immense feeling generated by the anti-pass campaign."²³⁴ Bunting speaks of the "country-wide ferment" in 1946.²³⁵

The basis for widespread class action is always unstable. It is never permanently there. It can never be sustained, at the highest level it reaches, unless it is developed at that time. And, certainly, it cannot be conjured into existence because of a set of factors operating to change the minds of sections of the petty bourgeoisie and Communists. The beginning of 1943 was the peak of the strike movement. During the course of 1944, the peak of community action was reached. By the beginning of 1945, there was a peak in the rise of union membership. That was the actual rhythm of the development of the resurgent workers' movement. The reality was that in 1945, the spontaneous tide pushing forward the mass movement had already begun to ebb. CNETU was already beginning to break up in a process which involved two major splits - the PTU in 1945,²³⁶ and the Makabeni group in 1947.²³⁷ In fact, the 1944 unity developments in CNETU were not uni-causal. As well as representing the drive inside the working class for unity and organisation, they also had to do with leadership attempts to ensure a majority against the PTU within CNETU.²³⁸ For

the major period in which the resurgence of the workers' movement had come to the fore in action and organisation, the leadership was generally opposed to a large scale class action. In the next phase of that resurgence the unions, because of the policies of their leaders, began to split. A spontaneous mass movement, with such a leadership where it is organised, and more generally lacking formal organisation cannot remain at the peaks of militancy and immediate willingness to struggle. The peaks which could be spontaneously reached had already been reached. When the basis existed for the workers' movement to be developed further, from the heights which it had spontaneously reached, that was not in accordance with the policies of its leaders. When the policies of those leaders changed, workers were no longer waiting, at precisely the same levels of combativity which had been reached. This meant that to be sustained and developed, the Campaign could not simply rely on the "country-wide ferment" and "immense feeling generated by the campaign". Working class spontaneity was not likely to provide the lead, as it had done in the 1942/43 strikes. That responsibility lay with the Campaign leadership.

Within the Campaign leadership, there was not a unified approach. The Youth League and the Communists were still in an uneasy, sometimes hostile relationship. The Xuma leadership was obviously reluctant, and later proved unwilling, to support the programme which had been agreed. The different approaches created an uneasy alliance within the Anti-Pass Campaign which was reflected at the conference. Inkululeko found it necessary to argue that there

was no truth in reports of splits within the Campaign. But it pointed out that the resolution on the action decided by the 1946 conference "was keenly debated, and it was not carried by a very big majority."²³⁹ A divided and indecisive Campaign leadership had before it the questions posed by its own programme. How would a national strike be organised? What demands would be put forward? How would these be secured? Before the questions facing the Campaign leadership were answered, it was overtaken by the development of the miners' strike of August 1946.

As has been stated, the possibility of a miners' strike developing in the course of 1944 had been clear at the AMWU conference. Basner described the strong support for a strike in this way:

"Over 1000 delegates from different shafts on the Witwatersrand were present. They wanted ... to strike there and then ... and on the other hand you had the officials who wanted to know whether we had exhausted all channels of negotiation for coming to an amicable settlement."²⁴⁰

In the course of 1944, power workers, coal trade workers, baking workers and milling workers were all on strike.²⁴¹ In the same period, there was the second Alexandra bus boycott, and the struggle in Orlando was at its peak. But after the peaks of industrial strike and community action had been reached and passed, the climate no longer existed in which a single important industrial struggle was in itself likely to be the catalyst for the development of a broader upsurge of struggle.

At the end of June 1946, there was a spontaneous strike of strategically important steel workers in Vereeniging.²⁴² On the mines, spontaneous strikes had broken out around the time of the April 1946 AMWU conference.²⁴³ But, at that time the leadership was still seeking a negotiated settlement. When the strike was officially called in August, it met with an immediate widespread response from the miners. At least 70,000, and possibly as many as 110,000, miners were involved in co-ordinated action.²⁴⁴ The miners were showing the same combativity which, amongst other

layers of workers, had already been expressed in class action. The particular living and working conditions of the miners served, to a certain extent, to isolate them from the mass of the class. But the issues facing the rest of the working class were also facing miners, even if they were experienced under unique conditions - for example, buying from mine stores, and living in mine compounds. Certainly the repression facing miners was greater than that facing other sections of the class. The miners generally face a tighter discipline through the compound system than other groups of workers. But although regimentation under tribal and mine police is specific to the miners, it can, in conditions of rising combativity, serve to fuel anger and determination to struggle, rather than suppress it.²⁴⁵ Similarly, the pressure of having to subsidise a family in the rural areas can, in conditions of rising combativity, serve to fuel that combativity.

The fact is that, when the strike did occur, it is likely that the repression was far greater than it would have been earlier. Firstly, War Measure 1425 had been passed, and meetings on the mines and of mine workers were now banned.²⁴⁶ Secondly, the state was freed from the pressures of the war effort, to be able to concentrate single-mindedly on repression in the face of a struggle. And thirdly, when the strike did finally develop, the miners were isolated, lacking the level of protection which would automatically have been afforded had their strike been part of a broader strike wave. The miners' strike reflected the same

combativity of the earlier strike wave and community action - but at a time when it had already run a part of its course amongst other sections of the class.

The strike decision was taken at a conference of more than 1,000 delegates on Sunday 4 August.²⁴⁷ The strike was to begin on Monday 12 August. The Guardian carried part of a speech made by Marks at the conference: "You are challenging the basis of the cheap labour system... You must be ready to sacrifice in the struggle for the right to be treated as human beings."²⁴⁸ The Guardian also reported that "the majority of the miners present, though they had stood at the meeting the whole morning, decided to remain for the anti-pass demonstration that afternoon."²⁴⁹ The strike received wide backing on the first day, with more than 50,000 miners reported as being on strike. On the same day, six workers were shot dead.²⁵⁰

On the 13th, a meeting of the strike committee agreed to call a general strike "within 48 hours".²⁵¹ In the middle of the meeting which took this decision, Marks was arrested.²⁵² The Strike Bulletin issued the following day announced that the strike would begin "from tomorrow", claiming that Johannesburg had been flooded with thousands of leaflets in support of the general strike call.²⁵³ On 15 August, a mass meeting in Market Square was forced to disperse.²⁵⁴ The strike call received hardly any support.²⁵⁵ The CNETU unions in Pretoria promised support for the strike "as soon as it gets going in Johannesburg".²⁵⁶ A statement issued by the EC of CNETU declared that "it has been decided to postpone the general

strike called in sympathy with the African mineworkers' strike, until such time as it is considered expedient".²⁵⁷ As we have seen, the programme of the Anti-pass Campaign was for a general strike. At the conference of the AMWU in April, it had been clear that a miners' strike was almost inevitable.²⁵⁸ The annual conference of CNETU, held in May, had unanimously agreed to give support to the miners if they went on strike.²⁵⁹ Despite this, there had been no preparation either by CNETU or by the Anti-pass Campaign for a general strike.²⁶⁰ Two days after the strike began, Phillips, the Chairman of the Strike Committee, commented that it had already been handicapped by arrests and raids.²⁶¹

Benson argues that "the strike committee had been incapacitated by the arrest of Marks and several other members. In the background trade unionists and the ANC quarrelled. Some of the ANC felt the strike was precipitate and should not have been called until the Union had achieved far greater strength, and for this blamed the influence of communists, while Lembede and the Youth League felt that Marks together with Xuma should have carefully organised a country-wide general strike, using the immense feeling generated by the anti-pass campaign."²⁶² Simons claims that there were divisions within the Strike Committee.²⁶³ Xuma refused to issue any statement of support while the strike was on.²⁶⁴ In conditions where there had already been a descent from the peaks of combativity, a combination of a lack of preparation, leadership divisions and state attacks explain why there was little response to the CNETU strike call. The miners

were therefore left to fight their struggle without any industrial solidarity action. In the face of such widespread action from workers at the very heart of the economy, the government was forced to look for decisive measures. It was not the first government to try to look for ways of simulating a mood of national emergency amongst the electorate immediately after a war, when its popularity was clearly declining. The strike was broken at gunpoint, after a massive wave of repression.²⁶⁵ A swartgevaar/red menace campaign was launched. Despite the militancy of the strike itself, the government was presented with conditions in which the isolation of the strike made its defeat more possible, and it was ended on 17 August, five days after it had begun.²⁶⁶

In his Strike Diary, Harmel wrote of "the glorious heroism, unity and determination of the African mineworkers, over 200,000 of whom, at one stage or another during the week participated in the strike.... Let us remember that these men live in compounds at the mercy of their employers and with no other place to go; scattered over the miles of the Witwatersrand with communication between mines impossible. That the organisation of their union was of the very slightest, hampered by the Fascist 'war measure' 1425 and the continual normal terrorism practiced on the mines. That they speak many different languages and have been indentured from every corner of Southern and Tropical Africa, and that no opportunity of imperialist play upon tribal differences has ever been missed by the Chamber of Mines.

"Then remember what it meant to strike last week. To face, unarmed, police batons, bayonets, and rifles. Thousands of unknown miners have been seriously wounded, had their heads bashed in, their bones broken. Reliable reports show that at least thirty have been shot dead or otherwise killed. So you can appreciate what those miners have done for the common cause: renew your faith in the working man and his destiny.

"The strike ceased to be merely a strike, and became a war between the government and the workers.... The workers of South Africa will never forget Bloody Tuesday and Bloody Wednesday, the 13th and 14th of August...."²⁶⁷

The defeat of the strike had an impact far beyond the strikers themselves. The resurgence of the workers' movement had now been struck a decisive blow. The working class had, after the 1942/43 strikes, stepped back from the levels of confrontation which those strikes had created. The wave of community action had, in turn, followed a similar pattern. Now the miners' strike had created a new level of confrontation. In the first phase, the working class had not sustained the level of confrontation reached because of the limits of spontaneity and the policies of its leaders. In this new phase of confrontation, the state was able to **exploit** those factors. This time, the workers did not step back, nor were they led back from the level of confrontation which they had created. In the case of the 1946 miners' strike, the workers were driven back by force, in a defeat with implications for the class in general. Inevitably, there followed

a period in which workers paused and held back from action. In this lull,²⁶⁸ as after the peak of the 1942/43 strike wave, there was again an upsurge of political development within the petty bourgeoisie.

But just as the last phase of the development of the politics of the petty bourgeoisie could only be understood against the background of the strike wave, so now the political developments within the petty bourgeoisie could only be understood in terms of the impact of the fact, and then the defeat, of the miners' strike. Each phase of the resurgence of the workers' movement had completely transformed the political conditions in which the opposition to the government and the employers was being carried through. While the impact of that defeat still dominated the working class and imposed a lull in the resurgence of the workers' movement, the processes making for the revival of class confidence and combativity were already in motion. While this continued beneath the surface, the miners' strike and the waves of struggle before it were having a profound impact and increasing the instability of the class alliance through which the ruling class organised its rule.

CHAPTER SIX

1946 - 1952

Until the strike wave, the black members of the NRC continued a fairly routine activity of making proposals which were largely ignored by the state.¹ As we have seen, 1942 was the highpoint as far as state talk about reforms was concerned. For as long as that talk continued, and the petty bourgeoisie was relatively free of direct mass pressure, the NRC provided a means through which a reasonably stable relationship between the government and sections of the black petty bourgeoisie could be acted out. Certainly, in the eyes of elements within the petty bourgeoisie, it came to be seen in this way.² But the pressures which combined to create the political developments which we have already seen within the petty bourgeoisie were acting to change the relative equilibrium upon which the NRC operated. The political approach of the CYL brought participation within the NRC under question,³ and such participation was attacked by the NEUM, in accordance with the policy of "non-collaboration with the oppressor."⁴

By the end of the war, political conditions had been changed by the resurgence of the workers' movement and the political developments amongst the petty bourgeoisie which followed. These in turn changed the relative stability of the relationship between the petty bourgeoisie and the government, and those

changes were increased by the moves which the government took, or threatened to take, in relation to the petty bourgeoisie. Luthuli was elected to the NRC in a bye-election in 1946. He has written of the situation:

"I was interested, though not at all suprised, as I went about among the people before the election, to notice how deeply disillusioned they were by this time with the Council.

"'What is the use,' they asked me, 'of your going to the N.R.C. in Pretoria? They do nothing but talk. Where has this Council got us?'

"It was only too true. For years now they had talked. Nobody listened. I was disillusioned myself and could only reply, 'There are people beyond South Africa who sometimes hear what we say. All we can do is try to shout to the world. All I can do is to help us shout louder.'

"It was hardly surprising that the Native Representation [sic] Council was no more than a hollow show. White South Africa was impenetrably dead, and their newspapers did nothing to educate them."⁵

The pressures which this process of participation in the "hollow show" created were reflected in a letter written by Xuma in July 1946.⁶ After the government had rejected what Luthuli calls "the Council's moderate proposals for certain reforms",⁷ Xuma called for the NRC to be adjourned, until the government removed major segregation measures, including the pass laws. But, as

developments were to show, this was not really the political position which Xuma held. Following the miners' strike, there was a series of moves relating to the NRC. As an immediate response to the political conditions created by the strike, the NRC voted to adjourn indefinitely.⁸ Xuma called an emergency conference of the ANC in October.⁹ That conference voted for a boycott of all elections under the Hertzog Bills, but opposed Lembede's motion for mass resignations.¹⁰ The petty bourgeoisie was responding to and reflecting the level of confrontation which had been created by the strike, but keeping doors open at the same time. In December 1946, the annual ANC conference supported the boycott and the adjournment decision.¹¹ In January 1947, the CP conference endorsed the ANC position.¹²

Several resolutions at the ANC conference in December 1946 relate directly to the miners' strike.¹³ A combination of the impact of the strike and the growing influence of the CYL militants can be seen in the generally militant tone and content of the resolutions overall. Known collectively as the "ANC minimum programme",¹⁴ the resolutions of 1946 were precursors of the Programme of Action of 1949. But in the aftermath of the strike, it was not merely the massive show of working class combativity which continued to have an impact on the organised petty bourgeoisie. There was also the fact that the strike - and with it the broader workers' movement - had suffered a serious defeat. The positions adopted in resolutions showed a shift to the left.¹⁵ As far as the immediate practical political steps of the petty

bourgeoisie were concerned, there was a retreat. In October, before the emergency ANC meeting, Inkululeko had raised the prospect of such a retreat:

"If Bloemfontein [the site of the emergency ANC meeting] shows that Africans are not yet in a position to carry forward the inspiring example of our Indian brothers and sisters in their great resistance campaign, we must admit that this phase of the Anti-Pass Campaign has not been a success."¹⁶

After the Bloemfontein meeting, the National Action Committee of the Anti-Pass Campaign met and issued a statement which postponed indefinitely the burning of passes and the one-day general strike.¹⁷ The ANC leadership responded to the overt strength of the state and began, again, to try to use the channel of communication which the state had created. In February 1947, a special ANC Executive meeting decided to re-open the boycott question.¹⁸ In March, the Doctors Pact was signed.¹⁹ In May a delegation of NRC members saw Smuts, and began to exert strong pressure within the ANC for the boycott and adjournment position to be changed.²⁰ In August, a statement from Paul Mosaka, an NRC member, confirmed the process underway:

"The leaders of the National Congress have not indicated how this resolution of Conference [the boycott resolution] is to be implemented. Meanwhile Dr. Xuma has openly declared his opposition to the boycott. Professor Matthews, Councillors Champion and Thema and Mr. R. Baloyi, prominent members of the National Executive of Congress, are not supporting the boycott resolution and attempts are being made to call a special Conference in order

to rescind or reverse this Resolution."²¹

At the December 1947 ANC conference, the CYL proposed that the boycott decision be reaffirmed.²² They were opposed by the ANC leadership, which was supported by the CP. The conference voted 57 to seven to reject the former boycott position in favour of boycott candidates.²³ At its conference in January 1948, the CP formally endorsed the ANC position:

"Conference recognises that the stand taken by the NRC Councillors in the boycott campaign has forced the Government to make concessions, but denounces these concessions as useless.... The NRC can not achieve any useful purpose, and the African peoples' efforts must be directed towards its abolition. In the forthcoming election to the Council, Conference resolves to work for the election of a bloc of candidates pledged to repeal of the Act, the introduction of a universal franchise, and recognition of the right of all South Africans to sit in Parliament."²⁴

The position adopted by the CP on the boycott was an important factor in the persistence of the antagonistic relationship which it had with the CYL. Initially, the Party had strongly criticised what it saw as the conservative nationalism of the CYL. The attempt to have Communists excluded from the ANC at the 1945 Conference was regarded as marking "a turning point or a swing to the right". It was described as coming from "reactionary elements in the Transvaal".²⁵ A meeting of the African Improvement Society was described in this way:

"Its speakers, in true Nazi fashion, launched out in vicious and lying attacks.... [A] well-known member of the African National Congress, Mr A M Lembede, was misguided and foolish enough to associate himself publicly with the meeting held by this questionable crowd.... [W]e find a new group of anti-Communists among the Africans. They call themselves 'nationalists'. But whether they realise it or not, they are the enemies of the African nation."²⁶

A Communist conference in Cape Town in September 1945 "took note of the tendency amongst certain sections of the non-Europeans to be influenced by anti-Soviet, anti-Communist and anti-white prejudices deliberately fostered by political opportunists among non-Europeans themselves." An article reported comments by Lembede about the trade unions and the national struggle under the headline: 'Mr. Lembede's outdated nationalism.'²⁷

The later course of developments was to show that the anti-Communist and narrowly nationalist views put forward from within the CYL were not unchangeable. The reality was that the positions of the CYL, like the general political conditions in which they emerged, were dynamic. As far as their political goals went, the CYL showed a combination of clarity and uncertainty. They were clear that Africans were the leading force in their own struggle, and that the struggle was directed against racial oppression. But there was no fixed clarity about the precise goals of that struggle. The CYL in fact faced the same questions which the CP had faced in adopting the slogan of the Native Republic. Was it a bourgeois democracy? Was it a form of socialism? If so, which

form? How could it be achieved? As was the case in the development of the ICU and the AAC, a radicalisation of elements within the oppressed petty bourgeoisie opened up the possibility of an alliance with the working class. The general orientation which the CYL had to the African masses in turn opened up, rather than constituted, an answer to questions of the relationship between two oppressed classes. Through what forms of organisation would that orientation be pursued? What precise demands would be put forward? What relationship would there be with actual struggles? What programme of action would be put forward? The CYL did not emerge with a fixed position on any of these questions. In conditions in which they were still seeking political clarity, two pressures served to draw them to the left. The first was their own oppression. The second was the impact of the workers' struggle. For much of the initial development of the CYL, the hostile relationship between it and the CP meant that the Party was not able to influence the CYL.

A part of the opposition from within the CYL to the CP was simply directed at the fact that the CP had many white leaders, and pursued what was seen as a "foreign ideology".²⁸ Moreover, the Communists were an increasingly influential, organised grouping within the ANC, at the time when the CYL was seeking to establish its own dominance within the organisation. The CP was encountered as an obstacle to the rise to dominance of the CYL within the ANC, and the organised petty bourgeoisie more generally. The CYL was made up of petty bourgeois individuals,

the majority of whom had no history of union involvement.²⁹ These factors did not make for an easy or immediate alliance with a Party in which white trade unionists were in a central position. But the CYL was not simply or definitively anti-white, or just seeking leadership positions. It was made up of a layer of individuals who were radicalised by their own oppression - and by the impact of the workers' struggle around them. Moreover, this was a layer whose political positions were not yet fixed, or fully developed.

In addition to the factors already mentioned, particular policies of the CP also served to promote an antagonism in the relationship with the CYL - and hence to undermine the Party's capacity to influence the radicalised youth. During the course of the war, two aspects of Party policy were particularly important in this regard. The first was its opposition to disruption of the war effort; the second was its attempts to maintain an alliance with, and its support for, a popular frontist government. As we have seen, the Party's policy during the war meant that it supported demands, but could not support action which disrupted the war effort in support of those demands. The need to reconcile these two aspects of its approach created extreme difficulties for the Party, when workers took spontaneous action. It also meant that the Party was not in a position to provide clear answers to the militants of the CYL as they began to address the issue of how to connect with the masses. The pattern was repeated in the Party's support for the government popular front. It was this same governing popular front which organised the

oppression which was part of the cause for the emergence of the CYL in the first place. The Party's position on each of these issues undermined its capacity both to relate to the action which workers were taking, and to influence the way in which black militants pursued that relationship. At the same time, the quest for allies which the Peoples Front policy promoted had led the Party into a quest for an alliance with the leadership of the organised black petty bourgeoisie. This led it to support the very ANC leadership which the CYL was trying to depose, partly because of the conservatism of that leadership.

The end of the war freed the Party from the constraints of support for the war effort. The immediate result of this was to make possible a more radical stance within the Anti-Pass Campaign, and to free the Party from resistance to a miners' strike. In both of these cases, the CP and the CYL had formally coinciding positions. There were thus conditions in which some improvement in the relations between the two organisations seemed possible. But the defeat of the miners' strike meant that the pressure of the workers' movement as an immediate factor in the situation was significantly reduced. As has been stated, the programme of action of the Campaign was suspended, in the aftermath of the strike, and the Campaign eventually floundered in a myriad of mutual recriminations.³⁰ One area of potential collaboration between the CYL and the CP was therefore removed. And, in the parallel process of arriving at a position in relation to the NRC, the CP and the CYL consistently took

different positions.

At the October ANC emergency meeting Kotane, the CP General Secretary, supported the boycott. But, in opposition to the position proposed by Lembede, he argued against the concurrent resignation of the NRC members.³¹ Some accounts claim that it was Marks who proposed a change of position at the December 1947 ANC conference, again in opposition to the CYL position.³² Whether this was the case or not, the Party supported the change, and Party policy changed accordingly.³³

Bunting argues that the relationship between the CP and the CYL was greatly improved by the co-operation between Kotane and Lembede at the emergency ANC conference in 1946. He also argues that "the whole course of the NRC boycott launched in 1946 is an example of ANC influence being exerted on the Communist Party, and not vice versa".³⁴ We have seen that the Party followed the position of the ANC on the boycott. This gave rise to criticisms within the Party:

"Now and again a question arises, giving a sudden jolt to the accepted view, and angry voices denounce what may be regarded as 'tailing behind the Non-European organisations'. At the 1947 National Conference and again at this year's conference considerable discussion centred on the question of boycotting At the first conference some comrades felt that, had the ANC not decided to boycott the election under this act, the Party would not have fallen in line."³⁵

When the position of the ANC changed, the Party followed. But the position of the ANC was not the position of the CYL. On the issue of maintaining the boycott position, the CYL was an isolated minority against the Communists and the rest of the ANC leadership. Under pressure from the organised petty bourgeoisie before, the Party had asserted that it had no interests different to anyone else's.³⁶ Under challenge from the CYL, it again asserted its loyalty to the ANC. But the CYL was not committed to the ANC in the abstract - its primary commitment was to establishing the ANC under its own leadership. It was only when the CYL took over the leadership of the Congress that the Party's willingness to follow the ANC could work to remove tension between the Communists and the Youth League.

The defeat of the miners' strike meant that the open assertion of the strength of the working class was not an immediate possibility. The development of class action and class organisation which had acted as a magnet on elements within the petty bourgeoisie was no longer an immediate force operating upon them. It was not in this way that the radicalised petty bourgeoisie was going to be drawn to the working class. The CP, partly because of its policy choices, was unable to act as a decisive influence upon the CYL. This meant that the primary pressure operating on the radicals of the CYL was the experience of their own oppression. Their response demonstrated the features of petty bourgeois ideology which have been mentioned. The primary task to which the CYL turned was the preparation of a

politicised elite. The support of the masses would be called for, once the politicised leaders were in place. Thus it was that for crucial parts of its development, the CYL was turned inward, fighting for dominance within the petty bourgeoisie. Consistent with petty bourgeois politics, the masses became a backdrop, against which the politicised leaders prepared themselves.

For a period, the political position within the petty bourgeoisie of the rising urban layer which made up the CYL had lagged behind its developing social position. In this phase, the CP had been encountered as the politically conservative allies of the older leadership which the CYL was seeking to displace. The CYL had tried to promote organisational measures designed to get the Communists out of the way. But as the political significance of this rising layer of the petty bourgeoisie began to be reflected in its influence within the ANC, so the problem which they believed the CP to be lessened. The disintegration of CNETU³⁷ meant that, as far as a mass base was concerned, the CP no longer presented a powerful potential rival and opponent.

The leadership struggle of the CYL was taken a decisive step forward at the 1949 ANC conference. Sisulu was elected General Secretary, the Programme of Action was accepted, and Xuma was replaced by Moroka, as the result of organised Youth League pressure.³⁸ For the CYL, these steps advanced both its ideological and organisational influence within the primary organisation of the black petty bourgeoisie. In the period leading up to this change of leadership, the relationship between the CYL and the CP

was still tense. The manifesto of the Youth League, issued in 1948, had warned against "certain groups which seek to impose on our struggle cut and dried formulae, which so far from clarifying the issues of the struggle, only serve to obscure the fundamental fact that we are oppressed not as a class, but as a people, as a Nation."³⁹ As the influence of the Youth League within the ANC leadership grew, the Party was criticised from within that leadership. In April 1948, the Party set up a propaganda campaign, focussing on the call for a universal franchise. The campaign, under the name of the Peoples Assembly for Votes for All was given backing by Xuma.⁴⁰ But there was opposition from within the ANC leadership and the CYL to what was seen as a Party attempt to campaign for mass support.

The Party, in turn, criticised the ANC for a lack of clarity in its attitude to the Peoples Assembly. "Until recently, when preparations of the first Transvaal-OFS conference of the Peoples Assembly for votes for all, were being made - up to the time of conference - ... [there] appeared conflicting statements in the press from the leaders. At this stage, nobody knows whether the ANC was supporting the Assembly or not Thus the people go one way and the leaders another way."⁴¹ In July, speaking on behalf of the Transvaal ANC executive, Mandela criticised Ramahonoe (Transvaal ANC President) for supporting the Assembly.⁴² The tension between the two organisations was finally removed only when the Youth League was confident that the Communists were not rivals in trying to win the support of the mass of blacks; and when the hold which the CYL had on the leadership of the ANC

was secure.

The CYL had, unlike the earlier ANC leaders, risen to leadership within the organisation with a programme which directed outward towards the mass of blacks, and called them to action. The strike wave had promoted this orientation; the miners' strike had confirmed it. But basic features of petty bourgeois political ideology remained intact within this perspective. From the point at which the organisational and ideological dominance of the CYL was achieved, the activities of the CYL reflected the assumption that, once its dominance was secure, its programme could more or less immediately be triggered off amongst the masses. A closer alliance was in the making between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. But the movement of the petty bourgeoisie towards that alliance had developed in such a way that it would be pursued, not on the basis of the actual rhythms of the workers' struggle, but through calls to action whose form and demands reflected the issues and priorities determined by the petty bourgeois radicals of the CYL.

During the 1946 miners' strike, the media had carried reports of a threatened attack by thousands of armed blacks.⁴³ In the aftermath of the strike, leading Communists were charged with sedition. One of the main prosecution charges was that the Party had a secret army.⁴⁴ The strike was portrayed by Smuts as the work of agitators.⁴⁵ The TLC had also made clear its belief that "natives were misled by irresponsible people."⁴⁶ These developments combined to promote a combination of rooigevaar and swartgevaar fears which played into the hands of the Afrikaner Nationalists. They could exploit the uncertainty amongst white workers, generated by the way in which the growing strength of black workers was portrayed, and present themselves as the most resolute opponents of the rooiswartgevaar. The Nationalists were operating on ground made fertile by the growing receptivity amongst white workers to radical policies which seemed better able to meet their needs as industrial workers, than those of the LP.

In the wake of the industrial expansion after 1933, white trade union membership had rocketed.⁴⁷ The majority of this new membership was in the industrial unions, and included an increasing number of Afrikaners, drawn to the towns and the jobs of the industrial expansion.⁴⁸ The movement continued through the 1930's and 1940's. By 1946, 72.5% of whites were living in the urban areas, compared to 61.3% in 1931.⁴⁹ According to the 1946 census, Afrikaners constituted 49.5% of the urban population, as opposed to 43.5% in 1936. The comparable figures for the Witwatersrand were 29.2% and 36.4%.⁵⁰ In the period 1939-1948, the

number of Afrikaners who were factory operatives increased by 298%, constituting 63% of whites in that occupation; in the same period, the figures for the number of Afrikaans fitters rose by 350%, although they still constituted only 21% of white fitters. In 1948, Afrikaners made up 86% of white unskilled workers.⁵¹ By 1939, Albert Hertzog was claiming that over 80% of white trade union members were Afrikaners.⁵² But the majority of trade union leaders were English-speaking and, in many cases, actually born in Britain.⁵³ The same applied to the leaders and parliamentary representatives of the Labour Party.⁵⁴ In a range of ways, the English-speaking trade union leaders discriminated against Afrikaans workers. That discrimination combined a traditional craft exclusivity with a simple racism. It involved corruption, exploiting recognition from employers, and control of access to apprenticeships.

Before the war, despite the grievances which clearly existed amongst the growing numbers of Afrikaans workers, the Afrikaner nationalist organisations in general had no specific orientation to white workers per se. The exception, as has been mentioned, was the Broederbond Raad van Trustees.⁵⁵ When an orientation to the white workers had arisen within the nationalist organisations it generally had to do with the entrepreneurial possibilities presented by the control of the money of white workers.⁵⁶ But the composition of the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie was changing, with an increasingly powerful urban petty bourgeoisie developing, amongst whom teachers were especially noticeable.⁵⁷ The increased

social weight of the Afrikaans workers was bound to act as a magnet for the petty bourgeois nationalist forces. During the war, with minor exceptions, the Afrikaner nationalists (and a small minority of the left) had been consistently opposed to support for Britain.⁵⁸ In this position, they were able to strike a chord with the politically different, but similarly anti-British, sentiments of Afrikaner workers. The position of the CP from 1941 onwards was not one of which the same could be said. Before the war the CP, in line with the peoples fronts policy, and under pressure from elements who maintained an orientation to white workers, had generally tried to win the support of white union leaders. There was a limited level of co-operation in anti-war committees. The level of co-operation between the CP and white union leaders was greatly increased when they could join together in organised support for the war effort. And, all the time, individual Communists held influential positions within the union movement. At any point at which the Communists raised support for black workers, or called for democratic reforms to be extended to blacks, they could be denounced as "kaffirboeties". Moreover, in the propaganda from Afrikaner nationalists, they could also be portrayed and denounced as part of the discriminatory establishment of the white trade unions. Afrikaner ideologues could hold out the spectacle of the Communist and English white trade unionists discriminating against the Afrikaner on one hand, but calling for advances for the blacks on the other.

The outbreak of the war led to the breaking up of the fusion UP. Kruger writes that "[w]ith the end of Fusion in September 1939 it

had for a moment been thought that adversity might make bedfellows of Hertzog and Malan once again".⁵⁹ By January 1940, there had been what O'Meara categorises as "a very shaky party political hereniging (reunion)...."⁶⁰ This was expressed in the formation of the Herenigde Nasionale Party (HNP).⁶¹ Within a few months, this had broken down, as different interests within the nationalist movement tried to respond to and exploit war-time conditions. Out of this process, the Afrikaner Party (AP)⁶² and then the Nuwe Orde (NO)⁶³ - New Order - were formed. War-time pressures had promoted a set of divisions within the Afrikaner nationalist movement and a competition for authority between the different elements. Given the increasing social weight of the Afrikaner workers, and their receptivity to political propaganda which attacked the discrimination and exploitation which they suffered, there was pressure on different elements within the nationalist movement to start turning towards the workers, in search of a base from which to take forward their own struggle. In the course of the war the attempts by different elements within the nationalist movement to establish a working class base escalated. It was only around such a base that the divisions within the nationalist movement began to be resolved, and the political strength of Afrikaner nationalism qualitatively increased.

The 1943 elections were an important indicator of the process in motion. Repeated attempts to construct some form of electoral front between the Nuwe Orde, Afrikaner Party, Ossewabrandwag (OB)

and HNP failed.⁶⁴ In those elections, the HNP received overwhelming support. This increased both its confidence and its capacity to put itself forward as the authentic political expression of Afrikanerdom. The AP, which had an ambivalent position on the war, lost all its parliamentary representation.⁶⁵ Behind the "khaki election victory" of the UP-led popular front, the HNP was increasing its support in key urban areas. On the Witwatersrand, its share of the vote went up from 22.1% in the 1938 election to 34.1% in 1943. In Pretoria, the increase was from 28.7% to 39.9%. In Johannesburg, the increase was from 12.8% to 17.2%. In each of the same areas, the vote of the LP, in alliance with the UP, dropped.⁶⁶ The election results, which revealed a growing core of urban working class support for the HNP, promoted an organised turn to the white workers. An HNP statement in *Die Kruithoring* declared.:

"The source of Nationalist strength in the towns lies in the workers who are streaming in their thousands to the industrial centres. For them the Nationalist Party offers a straightforward system of representation in the place of the present Communistic trade unions. Further, we assure them of a reasonable minimum wage based on the difference between the payments of White, Coloured and Native labour. Segregation will be forced in our industries as far as possible..."⁶⁷

In December 1943 the *Guardian* revealed that the HNP in the Cape was planning a census of all white workers over 17.⁶⁸

Until the outbreak of the war, the trade union success of the nationalists had been limited to the Railways. In 1943, the

Ossewabrandwag, which had been active in opposition to the war, formed the Aarbeidsfront (Labour Front) in a direct attempt to construct a mass base, and use the industrial strength of Afrikaans workers to disrupt the war effort. The efforts of the OB met with some success.⁶⁹ This further accelerated a turn to the question of support amongst workers by other groups in the nationalist petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie. In 1944 the Blankewerkersbeskermingsbond (White Workers' Protection League) was set up by the HNP, partly as a response to the formation of the Aarbeidsfront.⁷⁰ In 1945, as the pressures for unity began to produce results within the nationalist movement, the Bond absorbed the Nasionale Raad van Trustees which had been formed by Broederbond members and focussed on workers in the mines. It was finally on the mines that the trade union base of Afrikaner nationalism was consolidated.

The Mine Workers Union was run on autocratic lines, serving as an instrument of management control.⁷¹ In terms of a closed shop agreement in 1937, the union leadership had undertaken to stop any action which could threaten production, in exchange for control over access to jobs.⁷² There was a solid base for every kind of opposition within the union. The Hervormers,⁷³ the Afrikaner nationalist opposition, exploited the corruption of the union leaders and their overt collaboration with management. It was above all the policing role of the union on the issue of wages that provided the basis for a massive growth of the influence of Afrikaner nationalists. In 1943, under tremendous

pressure, the union leadership was forced to put forward a 30% wage demand.⁷⁴ In December 1943, miners at Crown Mines went on strike in support of the demand.⁷⁵ After first declaring that the time to strike was right, Broderick succeeded in having the strike called off and an arbitrator appointed.⁷⁶ At the beginning of 1944, the union began to ballot on a strike call, in support of the 30% wage demand. Ballot results began to produce massive majorities in favour of action.⁷⁷ At the first opportunity, union negotiators withdrew the 30% wage demand. Instead, the Union agreed to drop all wage demands, in return for a cash grant of half a million pounds over five years from the employers.⁷⁸ The nationalist opposition within the MWU was thus provided with conditions in which the struggle for widely supported economic demands of workers could be turned against the union leadership.

The Labour Party, as well as the union leaders, were skilfully set up as targets by Afrikaner nationalist propagandists. The Labour Party was strongly associated with the old craft unions. The union leaders were generally supporters of the Labour Party, or at least willing to co-operate with it. Any propaganda directed against the exclusivity of the craft unions and the policies of the union leadership could be extended to cover the Labour Party. Moreover, the Labour Party had entered the coalition government in support of British imperialism. Thus the Labour Party, with a degree of validity, could be seen as the party of corrupt craft union racists, ready to co-operate with the big capitalists, against the interests of white workers. Decades of class collaboration by the Labour Party were promoting

the conditions in which Afrikaner nationalism could gain a hold over white workers. There had been the support for British imperialism in the 1914-1918 war; the limitations which LP leaders and reformist unions had tried to place on the 1922 strike - a strike in which the Afrikaner nationalists had been able to nurture the beginnings of a working class base; the collaboration of the Labour Party in the Pact government which had placed restrictions on independent trade union activities; and finally, the collaboration with the ruling class in the war coalition. The Labour Party had promoted the conditions of its own demise. It had promoted amongst white workers a tradition of popular frontism and collaboration by union leaders. It was to be expected, therefore, that the Labour Party would one day have to watch not only Afrikaans workers but also some of its own leading members⁷⁹ turning towards Afrikaner nationalism - a different form of a continuing popular frontism.

While this situation was developing, the Labour Party was racked by another major split.⁸⁰ The immediate issue was the proposal by Smuts to re-introduce and extend the provisions of the Pegging Act. Some Labour Party members tried to form a new party, others joined the UP, and others joined the Afrikaner Nationalists.⁸¹ Underlying this split was the ongoing process making for the political disintegration of the Labour Party. Changes in the structure of the white working class had eroded its traditional base. A history of class collaboration had culminated in the war coalition, in which the Labour Party not only acted as an adjunct

of the primary political party of the ruling class, but was seen to be acting as such an adjunct. The LP had, since the 1915 split, lacked an independent class line. But, through the allegiance of white workers and the link with the craft unions, it had been able to maintain an **organisational** existence. In the war, that separate organisational existence was surrendered in favour of participation in the coalition. The disagreements over the Pegging Act were only the immediate issues around which the underlying process making for the disintegration of the LP came to the fore. At each stage, once the Afrikaner nationalists had taken the decision to seek a working class base, the politics of the Labour Party and the process making for its disintegration could be exploited. The decline of the Labour Party and the growth of the working class base of Afrikaner nationalism went hand in hand.

When Smuts introduced the repressive 1947 Trade Union Bill, he was in part seeking to make clear that his government would be completely resolute and firm in dealing with the struggles of black workers.⁸² But, in the climate of opposition to black organisation which was being promoted amongst white workers, it was the Afrikaner nationalists, not Smuts, who reaped the benefits. They could point to past liberal utterances to show that Smuts was a kaffirboetie; to the way in which Smuts had allowed the perceived threat of organised black workers to develop while he was busy concentrating on support for British imperialism; to Smuts as the person who let blacks organise to

the point where thousands of them could arm themselves and march against the whites (the propaganda of the swartgevaar), but who had called out planes to attack white miners when they went on strike. Above all, the Afrikaner nationalists could sow this type of propaganda in ground which was made fertile by the material situation facing the white workers - a situation in which social and economic pressures were mounting.

In 1946⁸³ and 1947⁸⁴ two miners' strikes under the leadership of the nationalist opposition within the MWU confirmed and promoted the processes under way. The 1946 strike was organised around the orchestrated sacking of an Afrikaans miner who had refused to pay union dues. In terms of the closed shop agreement he was sacked. 8,500 white miners responded to a strike call.⁸⁵ In January 1947, the nationalists called a one-day strike on the Rand. This was extended, into a strike of almost seven weeks, of nearly 6,000 miners.⁸⁶

The TLC responded to the growing challenge of Afrikaner nationalism with a series of retreats. Resistance to those retreats was weakened by divisions amongst the left.⁸⁷ At the 1946 TLC conference Sachs moved a motion to refer back the Executive's Annual Report - effectively a motion of no confidence.⁸⁸ The motion was seconded by Johanna Cornelius, a one-time Communist. One of the major points of Sachs' criticism was the "apathy" of the TLC leadership in fighting "fascist" influence inside the unions. Sachs in particular urged a policy of aggressive campaigning for the needs of white workers, as the best policy for combatting the

growing influence of the nationalists.⁸⁹ At the same time, he argued that any direct attack on racism in the workers' movement would be counter-productive.

In the immediate post-war situation there was growing resentment and anger on the issue of food prices and shortages.⁹⁰ This promoted the single campaign which the TLC leadership undertook in this period. The TLC executive decided to call on individual unions to ballot on the proposal for a general strike on the issue.⁹¹ In addition to the TLC unions, CNETU and the ANC expressed support for the campaign.⁹² The prospect was being opened up of a struggle on a wide front which began to challenge racial divisions within the working class. The *Guardian* reported that balloting was "proceeding in a number of unions, and in all cases the majority of the workers favour the proposal of a general strike." But the campaign ground to a halt, in the face of "what can only be described as sabotage on the part of certain top leaders of the SATLC". The President (Downes) and Secretary (De Vries) were singled out as "doing all in their power to impede the movement which their Executive has called into being." Some unions, including the MWU, refused to ballot their members.⁹³

In the course of 1946 and 1947, as the strikes under the nationalists were successfully called, there were moves within the TLC to institute a colour bar. The Pretoria branch unilaterally decided to bar the affiliation of black unions.⁹⁴ In

the run-up to the 1947 conference, there were reports of moves to drop the policy of allowing black members within the TLC.⁹⁵ At the conference, attempts to amend the constitution to that end were defeated.⁹⁶ During the course of 1947, the TLC was provided with its best opportunity of providing a militant counter to the nationalists. A strike of more than 10,000 white building workers lasted for nine weeks. It was eventually partly successful in winning a limited wage increase.⁹⁷ The strike became the focal point for wide support within the labour movement, and it received statements of support from the TLC nationally.⁹⁸ The attempts by the nationalists to act as strike breakers met with little success in Johannesburg, although the nationalists did have some support amongst building workers outside the Johannesburg area.⁹⁹ The strike created an opportunity to expose the strike-breaking approach of the nationalists - and underline the capacity of the organised centre of the labour movement to support strikers until victory was secured. But leadership divisions meant that the opportunity was not fully exploited. There was consistent tension between the Strike Committee and a committee of Joint Executives of the six unions involved in the strike.¹⁰⁰ The Southern Transvaal Local Committee of the TLC later complained that "the craft unions withheld their support from the strike both financially and morally".¹⁰¹ It was only when the strike had already been running for several weeks that the Local Committee of the TLC called a one day general strike in support of the building workers.¹⁰² Immediately that this call was issued, leading union leaders started campaigning against it, and the belated attempt to broaden the strike was effectively quashed.¹⁰³

The strike also opened up opportunities for racial divisions and the racial policies of the Building Workers Union to be taken up.¹⁰⁴ But the TLC and BWIU leadership surrendered those opportunities. The strike resulted in thousands of blacks being laid off, and some being sacked. The TLC and BWIU leadership refused to demand their re-instatement.¹⁰⁵ The Strike Committee - the militant leadership in the situation - was not even aware of the content of demands which were being put forward by black workers in the industry at the same time. If the TLC and union leadership were resisting a racial division in formal policy terms, they were operating in terms of such a division in practice. A similar approach had been revealed in the policy of the leadership to the 1946 miners' strike. At the time of the strike, a NEC telegram to the World Federation of Trade Unions read:

"Appears natives were misled by irresponsible people. Police methods controlling strike drastic but warranted. Such action was necessary to maintain law and order and prevent chaos."¹⁰⁶

It was later revealed that the TLC leadership had offered to organise the white unions to provide strike-breakers during the miners' strike.¹⁰⁷

The attempts to introduce a colour bar as formal policy were repeated at the 1948 TLC conference, and defeated again.¹⁰⁸ This time there had been a break-away by six Pretoria Unions, which formed the Co-ordinating Council of South African Trade Unions.¹⁰⁹ Not for the first time, the *Guardian* reported that the left had

won control of the leadership at the TLC conference.¹¹⁰ The extent to which it was the left that was now in control has to be questioned. Not long after the change of leadership, Calder, the TLC President, was calling on black unions to accept the principle of apartheid in the union movement.¹¹¹ This was a principle in terms of which the majority of the white unions had operated - and which was being most effectively championed by the right-wing unions. At the April 1949 conference the TLC disbanded, and was reconstituted as the "SATLC 1949".¹¹² The conference of 1950 adopted the colour bar for which the nationalists had agitated.¹¹³ The result was that the nationalists had effective political control, both over the unions which had broken away from the TLC, and the majority of those which remained in the reconstituted organisation. In the case of the former, this was through the political allegiance of the union leadership. In the case of the latter it was through the developing practice of the TLC of adopting nationalist policies in order to resist the nationalists.

In the course of this process, conditions had been created which made possible the victory of the opposition within the MWU, and the consolidation of a broader working class and trade union base for Afrikaner nationalism. That in turn meant that the stage had been set for the petty bourgeois and capitalist leaders of Afrikaner nationalism to seek new terms for themselves within the popular front through which the capitalists organised their rule.

In 1948, the Afrikaner Nationalists defeated Smuts at the polls. Malan became Prime Minister at the head of a coalition of the NP and the AP (led by Havenga) with a majority of five in the House of Assembly and one (the President's casting vote) in the Senate.¹¹⁴ The analysis of this victory of Afrikaner nationalism has been dominated by the conventional wisdom of the liberal analysts,¹¹⁵ and the response to that analysis by a range of analysts using a perspective informed by Marxism.¹¹⁶ The liberal conventional wisdom asserts that the apartheid policy of the Afrikaner Nationalists is irrational, that there is an essential contradiction between the dictates of economic development and the ideology of apartheid. This argument has been developed to assert that economic rationality will, through an undefined political process, impose itself upon the political irrationality. Much left-wing analysis is founded on a debate with this viewpoint. Against the liberals it is argued that apartheid has served the economic interests of capital; that, far from being incompatible with capitalist profits, it has served to promote and protect those profits, and the process through which they are extracted.

Much of the analysis along these lines has had as its clear task the exposure of the illusions of liberal analysis. Insofar as that task is concerned, analysis by the left has been largely successful in establishing the functionality of apartheid in serving capitalist interests. Through this analysis, there has been developed a conventional wisdom of the left based on an identification of that function. The changing labour requirements

of capital, and the need to maintain a cheap labour supply to meet those needs has been reflected, at the level of the state, in the development of apartheid. But this conventional wisdom has sometimes been reduced to a mechanical functionalism. This is most clearly reflected in the analysis of apartheid developed by Wolpe.¹¹⁷ His point of departure is analysis, developed by Leggasick, which follows the broad outline stated above. Wolpe's concern is to trace the genesis of apartheid to the changing structure of production in the Reserves, identifying a fundamental change between segregation and apartheid at that point. The methodology through which he approaches this task consists of an identification of changes in the Reserves, an identification of the emergence of apartheid, and an identification of the function of apartheid in serving capital's needs in the context of those changes. These three factors are then collapsed through a mechanist reductionism in terms of which the emergence of apartheid is explained simply in terms of its function.

Wolpe recognises the necessity of investigating what he calls "the critical point of articulation between ideology, racial practice and the economic system". He states that "the nature, form and extent of the conflicts generated by the structural conditions will depend not only on the measures of state control but on the complex conjuncture of political ideologies and organisation, trade unions, the cohesion of the dominant sector, and so on."¹¹⁸ But his methodology precludes an examination of the political dynamics of the process out of which apartheid emerges.

Once the genesis of apartheid is explained in terms of its functionality to capital, the struggles of black and white workers are automatically reduced to responses to a form of state which has been shaped, outside of class struggle, according to the changing structure of production in the Reserves. To the extent that the political movement of white workers is addressed, Wolpe employs an ex post facto description which loses the vitality of the political struggle for the leadership of white workers, the general dynamics of which have been considered above.¹¹⁹

There is a validity and a necessity in pointing to the way in which apartheid has served and continues to serve the interests of capital. But it is a simple form of economic determinism which identifies the functionality of apartheid to capital as if that in itself captures the political dynamic out of which apartheid emerges. The 1948 election represents not merely a change in government, but is also the reflection of an underlying dynamic movement in the political allegiances of white workers. As Lewis points out, without victory in key urban working class seats, the Nationalists would have been defeated in 1948.¹²⁰ But the importance of the shifting allegiance of white workers does not lie simply, or even primarily, in the fact that it has such an impact on electoral arithmetic. Underlying the electoral arithmetic of the 1948 election was a changing form of popular frontism. And leading up to that change, as has been discussed, was a dynamic process of political struggle for the allegiance of white workers.

In 1924, the opposition of white workers to Smuts had forced capital to change the form of its rule. The process was repeated in 1948. Faced still with the impact of the miners' strike, and also with the growing oppositionist base of Afrikaner nationalism within the working class, the ruling class was forced to restructure the alliance through which they organised their rule. The method of rule which was promoted through the results of the election was **dynamic**, containing within itself class tensions between workers and the petty bourgeoisie, and the petty bourgeoisie and capital, and basic class conflict between workers and capitalists. One of the tasks of the nationalist movement was to ensure that these conflicts and tensions were contained and not expressed. But they were there, nonetheless. Analysis employing the methodology of Wolpe distorts the broader political dynamic in this process. A correct aspect of analysis is distorted into being a whole analysis. From the understanding that apartheid serves the economic needs of capital, and from an attempt to combat liberal idealism, there is a distorted induction that apartheid arises ineluctably out of those economic needs as an automatic and inevitable response. In seeking to establish a position in debate with liberals, there is the danger that a more or less crude economic mechanism is substituted for the idealism through which the liberals explain apartheid. In the tendency towards such a substitution, what happens is that the crude economic determinism with which the liberals see apartheid crumbling is replaced with a similarly crude economic determinism

at another point. Apartheid is presented as if it emerges with an a-historical inevitability - because it serves the interests of capital.¹²¹ The implication of such an oversimplification is a twofold distortion. Firstly, it is presumed that the white workers were inevitably drawn into a class alliance with capital; secondly, there is an assumption that the historical process automatically produces results which are in the best interests of capital; either that the ruling class was in an unchallengeable position to decide, according to its own interests, when there should be a re-organisation of its rule, and what form it should take; or that it was made inevitable (by an unspecified process) that the form of re-organisation which emerged, against the conscious will of the majority of the most economically powerful big capitalists in South Africa and internationally,¹²² should be the form which big capital actually required to best serve its interests. Wolpe would contest these oversimplifications. But they are the product of a methodology which he is employing.

Translated into the conditions before the 1948 election, this means that the increasing hold of Afrikaner nationalism over the white workers was inevitable; that the ruling class logically chose Afrikaner nationalism to run their government; or, if they miscalculated, that automatic historical forces imposed the most favourable solution for capital on the situation, to correct the miscalculation by capital. It is perfectly possible and predictable that recurrently, the ruling class will miscalculate the situation. It is also possible that the balance of class forces, which the ruling class does not properly understand, may

produce a solution in its interests despite its miscalculation. I believe that both of these possibilities were operating, at the time of the 1948 elections. However, what is lost in simply explaining the course of events in that way is an understanding of the **dynamics** of the situation; the dynamics through which the balance of class forces becomes such as to produce that result; the extent to which the ruling class is **never** in complete control over the class struggle and the balance of forces which it creates.

Top layers of big capital in South Africa and internationally chose the outgoing UP government as their preferred option in the 1948 election. This does not mean that the Afrikaner Nationalists were not an **acceptable** option. Nor does it mean that there was not ruling class support for the Nationalists. But the fact is that the ruling class was not in a perfect position to choose, or have its choice implemented. The victory of the NP was in part forced on the ruling class through the position of a crucial and growing section of the white workers and petty bourgeoisie. For the capitalists, as their reaction to the 1922 strike amongst other things had shown, privileges for white workers over black workers was not - given the free choice of capital - the most logical and profitable situation. But it was a situation which the white workers, through their industrial and political strength and their social weight, had, in part, been able to force onto the ruling class. Similarly in 1948. In the abstract, a government which brought the prospects for the capitalists of

having to pay a higher bill for the "privileges" of white workers was not the ideal option, nor one which they all chose. It was, nonetheless, the actual option which the dynamic balance of class forces produced. The growing level of organisation and the open expressions of combativity amongst a structurally and socially changing white working class, and the challenge posed by an increasingly powerful black working class, took away any abstract freedom which capital may have had to choose perfect solutions. It imposed on the ruling class a form of rule which contained the seeds of its own instability. This was not merely because of the external threat to the ruling class alliance of the movement of struggle led by black workers, but due also to the fact that the internal stability of that ruling class alliance depended on the economic capacity of capital to continue to pay the price of relative privileges for white workers. It was primarily on the basis of their economic needs and grievances that the white workers were moving towards Afrikaner nationalism. It would depend on the extent to which the new government was able to diffuse and buy off those economic demands, service the labour requirements of capital, and control black workers, that the stability of the ruling class alliance was maintained. In 1948, the economic basis for parts of those requirements was there - an expanding economy. The political basis was less established, both as far as consolidating the new popular front, and imposing the necessary control over black workers, were concerned.

The development of the workers' movement had ensured that the

capitalists did not have the power to rule precisely as they chose. The ruling class had to accept a popular front, and the form of popular front which the 1948 elections and the political changes amongst white workers produced. But the limitations on that development - expressed both by the political influence of Afrikaner nationalism on one group of workers and the political context of the defeat of a strike amongst the other - meant that the ruling class was not being challenged to the extent that its capacity to rule in a way which served its interests was under threat.

In this balance of forces, the ruling class was able to begin to re-organise its rule in a way which would, all else being equal, impose discipline on the two wings of the workers' movement. Whether all else was equal or not would depend on factors outside of the complete control of the ruling class - consistent economic expansion, the extent to which the impact of the defeat imposed on the resurgent movement of black workers could be maintained, the extent to which Afrikaner nationalism could maintain and extend its influence amongst white workers. The 1948 election victory of Afrikaner nationalism did not, in itself, bring the discipline and the political stability which the ruling class was seeking. The Afrikaner Nationalists now assumed a mandate, on behalf of capital in general, of consolidating the political allegiance of the white workers within a popular front, and using a stabilised social base and the development of a more adequate repressive state apparatus from which to discipline the increasing, demonstrable strength of the black workers. That was

a task which lay **before** the new government, not one which its election victory had accomplished. The struggle for political control over the white workers was still in motion. For the meantime, a growing layer of white workers had been drawn into support for Afrikaner nationalism, and through that, into a popular frontist alliance. But, as O' Meara points out, although the LP was effectively disintegrating, the electoral base of the nationalists amongst white workers was still limited.¹²³ For workers turning towards the nationalists, their support for the nationalists was still tentative. At the same time, it should be recognised that the political alternatives available to white workers - even that represented by the CP - all promoted some form of popular frontism. Nonetheless, beneath the change in the form of popular front alliance, was an underlying basis of class conflict and tension, not a foundation of guaranteed stability and historical permanence.

As far as the black workers were concerned, the defeat of the miners' strike had, for a period, served to drive back the resurgence of their movement. But the new government did not inherit conditions, nor create conditions by its electoral victory, in which the combativity of black workers was permanently suppressed. Even as it turned to the tasks facing it, there were already signs of the build-up of a new wave of combativity amongst black workers.

In 1923/24, the CP had called upon white workers to vote for a popular front to "get rid of Smuts". The Peoples Front policy adopted in 1935 meant that the Party turned to building a popular front to resist fascism. In the elections of 1943, the Party had tried to promote a popular front between the UP, LP, Dominion Party and the Communists.¹²⁴ When these attempts failed, the Party decided to stand its own candidates.¹²⁵ Arguing against criticism from the LP for this decision, an editorial in the Guardian replied: "The CP believes that it can make a valuable contribution to the achievement of a total war effort in South Africa. For this purpose alone it wants representation in Parliament."¹²⁶ The Party did not stand against the LP in any seat, and declared its support in seats where neither the CP nor the LP were standing, for "the pro-war candidates."¹²⁷

The 1948 Party conference declared:

"[C]onference regards the primary task of the Party in the forthcoming general elections as that of advancing the struggle for the universal franchise, and for a Socialist democracy, and of rallying the people against Imperialism."¹²⁸

But when it came to translating that position into a precise statement of whom to vote for and what action to take, a continuity with the positions of 1923/24, 1935 and 1943 emerged. There was a growing tendency to portray the Nationalists as fascists¹²⁹ - and an associated tendency to look to the war-time popular front for a solution to the advance of the Nationalists. A Guardian editorial, under the heading "Keep the Nats out" put

the position in this way:

"Even though the UP manifesto published last week can make little claim for providing the electorate with a clear-cut alternative to the fascist aspirations of the Nationalists, it would be wrong to assume there are no differences between the parties..... The primary duty of every voter in the coming General Election is to keep out of power that section of the reactionary wing which offers the greatest threat to democracy and progress - the National Party."¹³⁰

The Party put up three candidates itself - in Cape Flats, Hillbrow and Troyeville, and called on the voters to "USE YOUR VOTE TO DEAL A DEATH BLOW TO THE MALANITES"¹³¹. In each of these cases, the implication of the position was clear - a vote for the UP where there were no LP or CP candidates. In an interview with the *Guardian*, Kotane spelled out the position. Arguing against those who were calling for a Coloured boycott, he called on Coloureds to vote for the UP where there was no CP candidate.¹³²

The CP described the impact of the election results in the pamphlet 'Malanazi Menace': "Shocked and bewildered. That just about sums up the feeling of most South Africans on learning the result of the General Election."¹³³ This reaction clearly extended deeply into the Party membership and leadership. It was to be an important component of the perspective from which the Party leadership decided how to react both to the growing threat of government attacks, and the growing receptivity to organisation and action developing amongst black workers. In the immediate

aftermath of the election, the Party explains the election result in terms of the role of the UP:

"The defeat of the United Party is the result of widespread dissatisfaction with a government which failed to oppose the programme and policy of the reactionary Nationalist Party and its allies with a bold, positive and progressive programme."

It argues that "[t]here can be no doubt that the United Party itself paved the way for the victory of their Nationalist opponents". The statement calls on "all democratic elements" to "devote themselves to the task of developing a broad democratic front to resist any attempt to attack the present rights of any section of the people, and which will fight for the extension of Democracy...."¹³⁴

As early as 1944, in the pamphlet 'What Next?', the Party had warned that the UP could not be seen as a safeguard against fascism.¹³⁵ But in the run-up to the 1948 election, it identified the UP as a part of the resistance to what it portrayed as fascism. In the immediate post-election analysis, the Party has identified the UP as the cause of the Nationalist victory. But there is a tendency also to see the UP as a part of the solution to "Malanazism". Under the headline "Hold the fort", the post-election editorial of the *Guardian* argues:

"It is the duty of every anti-fascist today to hold the fort until the present state of affairs can be reversed, until we can return to power a government under which it is possible to work for progress and democratic advance, a government which is

susceptible to pressure from the progressive rather than the most reactionary and racialist section of the population."¹³⁶

For some within the Party, the "anti-fascists" clearly included the UP, or at least a large part of it; and the government which fitted the description was the type of government which had played a "progressive role" during the war. This tendency was to become clearer, as the threat of direct government action against the Party grew. In its call for resistance to the Unlawful Organisations Bill, the Party made it clear that the broad democratic front of resistance included "every South African who is not in the NP."¹³⁷

In the period after the 1946 miners' strike, the ANC was searching for an orientation. The minimum programme adopted in 1946 contained an orientation to the masses. But, in the period in which it was adopted, a period dominated by the development and defeat of the 1946 strike, the Xuma leadership retreated from the programme of action agreed by the 1946 Anti-Pass conference, and did not pursue the programme of action called for in the 1946 ANC conference resolutions; nor were conditions within the workers' movement in this period such as to promote a mass upsurge towards which the ANC could orientate. Neither did the situation appear to provide the openings for an alliance, which could be expected to produce real reforms, with sections of the state. The 1948 election results confirmed and deepened the dilemma facing the ANC: its leadership was not committed to actively pursuing a mass orientation; nor did it seem able to deliver reforms through an alliance with sections of the state.

The confusion as to how to pursue the struggle for reforms was reflected at the top level of the ANC. The 1949 conference minutes record an appeal against disciplinary proceedings instituted by the Alexandra branch against Baloyi, Gumede and Modiso who acted as agents for the Nationalists during the 1948 elections:

"The facts in favour of the Appellants were that they claimed that they had participated in the elections because no direction had been given as to the attitude to be adopted by Congress members and they were accordingly free to support whom they pleased.... Prof. Matthews said that the Executive Committee frankly admitted that there had been much confusion amongst the most loyal of Congress members owing to the vacillating policy of Congress on this question."¹³⁸

In this period, the CP identified and responded to manifestations of the crisis of orientation within the ANC:- vacillation, conflicting statements, failure to carry through ANC policy, and a general lack of clarity of ANC approach on key issues, at leadership level. At the end of 1947, Freedom wrote:

"[W]e have waited in vain for bold and courageous action to be initiated by the leaders of the Congress in support of their own 'boycott' decision. But with exception of a few isolated but determined action ... all is quiet on the boycott front."¹³⁹

In June 1948, Inkululeko wrote:

"The African National Congress, the only African peoples' organisation worth speaking about, is undergoing a serious

political crisis. Since August, 1946, when the African mine workers came out on strike, and the Native Representative Council 'adjourned indefinitely', the crisis set in.

"Since then, the movement entered a period of resolution to boycott, which were taken at various national conferences. These resolutions were either not carried out, or deliberately violated by the leaders themselves. Until recently, when preparations for the first Transvaal-OFS conference of the People's Assembly for votes for all, were being made - up to the time of conference - it became very clear that the crisis was intensifying. There appeared conflicting statements in the press from the leaders. At this stage, nobody knew whether the ANC was supporting the Assembly or not.... Thus the people go one way and the leaders another way."¹⁴⁰

The problems facing the ANC emerged, in part, because of the non-viability of an orientation based on the expectation of reforms from a "progressive wing" of the state. The election results had not themselves created the situation in which such reforms were not forthcoming. But they had made that situation clearer to those within the ANC. The CP identified and criticised the consequences of that orientation, but not its basis. The Party had accepted the core of that basis in their own approach during the war. Now, in the conditions immediately following the Nationalist election victory, it is reflected again in the tendency to look towards "progressive" sections of capital for an alliance against the Afrikaner Nationalist government.

This was not the only tendency within the Party. As the Party comes under increasing attack from the government, there is a tendency also to turn to mass action as a form of defence. In November 1949, Carneson declared:

"The old form of protests will not work any longer.... We have got to start seriously thinking about organising a general strike of the non-European people down here in the Cape within the next six months to safeguard our liberties."¹⁴¹

The two tendencies within the Party were not necessarily compatible.¹⁴² The attempt to develop mass strike action by blacks was not likely to be seen as useful by those within the Party who, consistently with the Peoples Front approach, were seeking to develop alliances stretching from racist trade union leaders to UP-supporting employers. Together with the attempt to build such alliances, and on the basis of the method of the Peoples' Front, there was a pressure against any criticism of potential allies. Although the Party was sometimes sharply critical of the policies of the TLC and LP leaderships, in its post-election analysis, there is a notable absence of any analysis of the role of the TLC and LP in the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism.

In its analysis of apartheid, the Party position showed similarities both with the liberal conventional wisdom and with the mechanist methodology reflected in the analyses of Wolpe and Bunting. In October 1948, *Freedom* portrayed apartheid as economically irrational, as far as capital's interests were

concerned:

"There is, in fact, a point where the capitalist's self-interest clashes with a rigid caste system. The two things can be reconciled at the 'higher' level at which profits are distributed.... When extended to the source of profit, labour power, however, the caste barriers are an obstacle to profit-making.... [T]he Nationalists vow that they will sacrifice profits ... to appease their god of race and colour".

The article argues that the UP, "representing the 'liberal' capitalist, is torn between the conflicting aims of preserving White domination and of increasing profits by removing the colour bar in industry...." On the basis of that conflict, Freedom identified a progressive wing of the ruling class which constituted a potential ally in the struggle against apartheid:

"[This conflict] means that the ruling class is divided in their attitude towards segregation; that among them are potential allies of the non-Europeans. The obvious thing to be done is to transform this section into active adherents of the struggle against the colour bar".¹⁴³

When it came to explaining why white workers had voted for the NP, the Party analysis reflects a reductionism, applied at a different point to that of Wolpe. "The defeat of the United Party is the result of widespread dissatisfaction with a government, which failed to oppose the programme and policy of the reactionary Nationalist Party and its allies with a bold, positive and progressive programme."¹⁴⁴ The Party seeks to identify the reasons for a turn away from the UP, but puts forward no

explanation of why that "dissatisfaction" is expressed in a vote for the NP. The process out of which the dissatisfaction turns into that particular response is not explored; the latter is reduced to the former. A similar methodological pattern sees apartheid arising because of the economic needs of capitalism; and white workers turning to the Nationalists because of their experience under capitalism. There is an aspect of reality contained in each vision. But the approach precludes a recognition, and hence an investigation, of the dynamic political process by which the economic reality is translated into the political development.

We have seen that when the Party tried to pursue the Peoples' Front after 1935, there was confusion as to the precise role of the Party - a confusion which extended to questions about its very existence. In the period after the Nationalist victory, when there is a tendency within the Party to seek to reconstruct the war-time Peoples' Front, a similar confusion develops. Lerumo, a member of the Party Central Committee at the time, points out that there were those in the Party leadership "who had come to doubt the need for the very existence of the independent Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class."¹⁴⁵ The implications of this position and the way in which the Party connected with the developments around it will be discussed at different points below. But it indicates that, at a leadership level, it was a confused and disoriented Party, with two significantly differing approaches which had to respond to the dynamic political conditions of the post-1948 election period.

An ex post facto analysis which sees only that apartheid serves the needs of capital actually ignores the real process of struggle for the political leadership of the white workers which was in dynamic motion at the time. The same a-historical extrapolation, applied at a different point, distorts the political dynamics at work after the electoral victory. This approach is exemplified in Bunting's analysis of apartheid, *The Rise of the South African Reich*. Apartheid, as the full range of social, economic and political controls which it came to embody is lifted out of time and historical process, and placed as a finished social blueprint into the minds of the new Nationalist government, and from there, onto society. Bunting writes:

"There has been nothing haphazard or laissez-faire about Nationalist rule, in striking contrast to previous regimes. Operating on the basis of a preconceived ideology which has undergone very little change in the last fifteen years [writing in 1963/64] the Nationalists have planned their strategy with care and worked step by step towards their goal. Nothing has been left to chance."¹⁴⁶

A number of moves by the new government appeared to confirm this approach. In December 1948, they stopped the payment of family allowances to Indians;¹⁴⁷ school feeding schemes for Africans in the rural areas were abolished; the grant for school feeding for Africans in the urban areas was cut;¹⁴⁸ unemployment insurance was taken away from Africans earning below 182 pounds, and from

casual and seasonal labourers.¹⁴⁹ But, in the politically volatile situation of South Africa after 1948, the government was not free to simply mould society according to an ideological blueprint. On the contrary, it was the political volatility of the situation which moulded and imposed on the government the immediate range and nature of the political steps it took.

It is possible to trace back an ideological continuity, particularly to the 1930's, and show the way in which the framework of apartheid was being developed by Nationalist ideologues.¹⁵⁰ It is also possible to show a degree of consistency between that framework as it was ideologically conceived, and the reality of apartheid through its history. But none of this removes the actual historical process through which the ideas were generated, given social meaning, acted out, implemented, and adapted. Even if apartheid can be identified as a coherent and developed ideology, and if reality has been changed along the lines of that ideology, still the actual dynamic relationship between the ideas and the attempt to implement them remains. That dynamic is a crucial part of the historical process. To ignore it is to see the continued rule and relative stability of the Nationalist government, and project that apparent stability backwards to the first point at which a Nationalist government emerged. It is to identify the extent to which apartheid has served the interests of capital, and project that backwards to make the emergence of apartheid an historical inevitability, without seeing the political dynamic out of which apartheid

actually emerged and was shaped.

In 1948, the balance of these forces in no way ensured that the form of rule imposed on the ruling class would be stable and that the interests of the ruling class would be met in the optimum way through the election victory of the Nationalists. A concomitant of the failure to recognise the political dynamics out of which apartheid emerges is the failure to recognise that, in the period immediately after the Nationalist election victory, those dynamics are still in motion. White workers were an active factor in the change of government and form of popular front. The Nationalists were able to qualitatively increase their support, and the form of popular front changed because, in part, growing numbers of white workers were not willing to continue living in conditions of insecurity, with perceived threats to their jobs and living standards. The legacy of the history of popular frontism and the retreats by the leaders of white workers that have been discussed was that these political expectations amongst white workers should lead them towards the available bourgeois alternative. Nonetheless, the determination to improve their situation was a moving factor amongst white workers which did not necessarily, or automatically, translate into support for the alternative to which they turned. As the 1946 developments around food shortages and the 1947 building workers' strike demonstrated, the issue of an alliance with black workers was posed before white workers in the context of the issues actually and immediately facing them, not simply as an abstract issue of class solidarity.

The ruling class was divided, with some capitalists being leading supporters of the Nationalists, and others continuing support for the UP.¹⁵¹ Behind this division was ruling class uncertainty about how to modernise state control over the mass of black workers. The judiciary, representing the political status quo of the ruling class before the election, clashed with the new government on some key issues. These included government attempts to remove passports,¹⁵² and the proposed legislation to remove the Coloured franchise.¹⁵³ The judges had all risen to their positions in a framework dominated by the norms of the British judiciary; they had been appointed by the Smuts government. The controlling forces within the new government represented the rise of social groups which, by and large, had been excluded from the dominant political culture. The judiciary continued to oppose some government moves. What was different was that they were now opposing moves whose essence was to confirm the new political balance of forces within the government structure. Over time, the Nationalists refined their method of dealing with this opposition, and began placing their own appointees in key judicial positions.¹⁵⁴ Amongst some erstwhile capitalist opponents of Afrikaner nationalism, the response to the election result was a quest for a new relationship with the Nationalists. Others looked for ways of maintaining an effective opposition which would restore their first choice political party to government.¹⁵⁵ There was the hope that the 1948 election result, which had been unexpected, would be overturned by the 1953 elections.

The movement of struggle developed by black workers had been driven back after the defeat of the miners' strike. But, beneath the surface, combativity was already beginning to grow again, and was to show itself in massive responses from workers to calls for political action. As has been discussed, the rising militants of the CYL were moving towards their victory within the ANC. This meant a situation in which the primary organisation of the black petty bourgeoisie was increasingly committed to a mass orientation and the attempt to develop mass action. Finally, the volatile political situation which had seen class action by black workers, then white workers, then a change of government, meant a growing political nervousness amongst sections of the white petty bourgeoisie who had seen their interests as tied up and secure with the UP government.¹⁵⁶ This nervousness was promoted, as black opposition mounted and was reflected in massive demonstrations and support for political strikes, in 1950-1952. In April 1951, the Torch Commando emerged, holding a massive procession of more than 20,000 people through the streets of Johannesburg.¹⁵⁷ The immediate focus of the demonstration was the Separate Representation of Voters Bill, which had been published in February. Much of the support for the Torch Commando came from ex-servicemen. It is likely that amongst its supporters were white workers who had no organisational alternative through which to pursue their grievances, in conditions in which the TLC was consistently retreating, the CP had disbanded, and the LP was collapsing. As the Defiance Campaign began to develop, the Torch Commando declared its opposition, and the leadership soon

disintegrated with the apparent mass support evaporating. These developments reflected the same things as the formation of the Torch Commando in the first place. There was dissatisfaction, insecurity and uncertainty within sections of the white petty bourgeoisie which could be traditionally relied upon to be more or less passive supporters of the major party of the ruling class.

In the period immediately following the elections, many of the most decisive moves of the new government had little to do with any pre-ordained abstract blueprint; nor did they emerge as direct responses to the labour requirements of capital. In the situation, characterised as it was by the instability of the government, these measures had to do with the attempt by a bourgeois political party to secure its electoral base, and by a government of capital to organise the popular front which it was in power, in part, to maintain.

The Group Areas Act, and the associated Population Registration Act¹⁵⁸ were such measures. Amongst other political and economic functions, they were also useful as political devices which drew clearer social lines of demarcation around those whom the Nationalists were seeking to consolidate as a political base. Administrative decisions which were implemented in the Transvaal, imposed language-based segregation on white schools¹⁵⁹ and served a similar purpose. Together with clear moves to rationalise the system of Bantu education (which had developed in a fairly ad hoc

way) to ensure that it became a training for a cheap labour system, were equally crucial moves aimed at ensuring that white education helped in the consolidation of a distinct social group, from which could be drawn a social and electoral base. What such social policies did, first and foremost, was to promote the consolidation of socially, culturally and physically distinct centres of political support for Afrikaner nationalism.

It is consistent with this approach that the first targets for repression by the government should have been those who stood in the way of its consolidation of a solid political base within the working class. The victory at the polls served to accelerate, and add an administrative/legislative weapon to the campaign which was already being waged by sections of the nationalist movement to destroy the left-wing of the white unions, and build organisations of white workers under the direct leadership of nationalists. The nationalists identified the Communists as their primary target. Two major industries which were identified were mining (the nationalist opposition had already won a majority in 1948),¹⁶⁰ and clothing. The first was an economically central industry in which large numbers of Afrikaans workers had come into urban employment.¹⁶¹ In the case of the clothing industry, the target was a union leadership which, despite public Communist affiliations and the consistent campaign of Nationalists, succeeded in holding the support of its largely Afrikaans membership.

The tactics which the Nationalists used were threefold: firstly,

there were legislative and administrative measures; secondly, they set up a number of rival union bodies; thirdly, elements within the nationalist movement exploited the grievances of workers against their employers and organised extra-parliamentary action which sometimes amounted to simple mob violence. Together with the campaign employing these means, and aimed at the white workers in specific target industries, went a continuing and escalating attempt to undermine the influence of the TLC as an authoritative trade union centre. Immediately after its election victory, the government appointed the Industrial Legislation Commission of Enquiry to investigate all areas of industrial legislation and organisation. The recommendations of the Commission in 1951 included proposals for state control over many areas of union activity including, for example, the right of unions to issue publications. A special CNETU conference to study the recommendations of the Commission concluded that the "fundamental aim of the Recommendations [was] to consolidate race prejudice and to divide and muzzle the trade union movement so as to perpetuate the idea of baaskap."¹⁶²

In 1949, the government introduced statutory job reservation measures in the building industry, which were consolidated within the Native Building Workers' Act of 1951.¹⁶³ For the rest, job reservation continued through the industrial colour bar, rather than through new legislation.¹⁶⁴ The Building Industry legislation served to provide white workers with protected access to jobs in one industry.¹⁶⁵ But the real meaning of the legislation extended

further. It served also to take the control of access to jobs out of the hands of the union, and bring it firmly within the control of the government (subject, outside of government employment, to the employment decisions of capital). This process was continued and developed through administrative measures and the Apprenticeship Amendment Bill.¹⁶⁶ From that period, there were complaints made by some unions that appointments, previously made in consultation with the unions (for example, to positions such as Industrial Compensation Assessors), were now being made unilaterally by the government.¹⁶⁷

In reality, the new government was doing what the Smuts government had been incapable of doing. Through a set of administrative and legislative measures, any semblance of independence of the white unions was being undermined. Their sources of influence were being removed. This process was reflected and extended by the development of new trade union bodies by the Nationalists.¹⁶⁸ The fact that these were effectively government-sponsored organisations represented a further step in the process by which the remaining vestiges of the independence of the union movement as a whole were being eroded. The process of extending Afrikaner Nationalist influence and control amongst the organisations of white workers went hand in hand with the process of extending state control. The former was, in part, the means through which the latter was achieved.

The same process was continued in the different conditions of the Garment Workers' Union. Although Sachs, the General Secretary,

was set up as a Communist bogeyman and kaffirboetie by the bourgeois media, it is worth noting that, firstly, his union had maintained racial separation, with separate white and coloured branches; secondly, he had been expelled by the CP.¹⁶⁹ His willingness to move outside the constraints of CP policy during the war and respond to the anti-British feelings of his members was a central factor in the maintenance of his support within the union.¹⁷⁰ Nonetheless, in the conception of the government and his members, Sachs was a Communist fellow-traveller. As we have seen, under pressure from the Nationalists, he was ready to clearly state his support for the Soviet Union. The Afrikaner nationalists used the Communist label to attack him. But he was a target first and foremost because he was seen as being responsible for the maintenance of a form of independent unionism, with the support of Afrikaans workers. Nationalist attempts to undermine the position of Sachs go back at least to 1944,¹⁷¹ at a time when the nationalists were turning their attention to the white workers in a more consistent and organised way, when there was an attempt to generate an anti-leadership strike. The election victory of the Nationalists changed the conditions of their struggle against the Sachs leadership. In May 1949 he had his passport withdrawn, to prevent him from attending a conference in Britain.¹⁷² In 1950, the Nationalist Werkerspers started three union newspapers, for the garment workers, building workers and mine-workers.¹⁷⁴ (Sachs was involved in a number of successful libel cases against them.)¹⁷⁵ There were claims that the Nationalists would defeat Sachs in the 1950 union leadership

elections. Despite this, in February, a meeting of more than 2,000 members elected him, with only 15 votes against.¹⁷⁶ Eventually, in 1952, the Suppression of Communism Act was used in an attempt to remove Sachs from office¹⁷⁷(together with other left-wingers and Communists within the union movement).

With the consistent support of a layer of Afrikaans women unionists, Sachs had remained in his position, and the union had resisted state interference. These Afrikaans women represent the continuing tradition of commitment to unionism amongst Afrikaner workers. In the actual conditions of the time, they represent the one strand of the political development of Afrikaner workers; the other, which was coming to dominate, was the growing influence of Afrikaner nationalism. The women in the clothing industry were often productive workers, and could be expected to be freer to respond to their experiences as workers than many other groups of whites.¹⁷⁸ For a period, the majority of them continued to resist the attempt by the nationalist movement to bring them "under control". However, the more direct state attack against Sachs coincided with three other factors which were combining to undermine his position, and weaken the capacity of the women to continue with their commitment to independent unionism. Firstly, the deteriorating economic conditions within the industry and the grievances which these generated could be exploited by skilful Nationalist propagandists.¹⁷⁹ Secondly, the general process of the consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism was going on around the women in the union. Thirdly, the union leadership in general was

consistently stepping back from any stand against the Nationalists. Each Nationalist advance within the union movement was met by a retreat or a concession from the TLC leadership.

Consistent collaboration and reformism had left that leadership totally unequipped to build a resistance and make a stand, even when its own existence was under direct threat in the changed conditions after the Nationalist election victory. Lewis points out that "the failure of the TLC to unite in total opposition to the government's Suppression of Communism Bill in 1950 demonstrates the penetration of anti-communism and the political bankruptcy of the Council."¹⁸⁰

On the one hand, the Afrikaans women were subjected to the articulate and aggressive voice of the Nationalist-dominated unions and media, apparently having the ear of the government. On the other, there was the tentative, retreating voice of the TLC. And this was going on while their own union was seemingly unable, with its relatively independent stance, to develop a resistance to the economic attacks by the employers. If the voice coming from the TLC was muted, even more so was that of the LP. It was in the process of breaking up. In these conditions, any attempt to develop the identity of the women with the broader organisations of white workers was made extremely difficult, and increasingly likely to fail. There is no evidence that Sachs tried to promote the alternative of developing the link with black workers in the industry. The processes of undermining the limited level of trade union independence which existed were in

motion, and could not be expected to be permanently and successfully resisted by one isolated group of workers.

In the case of the mineworkers, the opposition movement won control of the leadership in 1948, and was confirmed in office after the parliamentary election victory of the Nationalists.¹⁸¹ The reality of Nationalist politics within the trade union movement is clearly demonstrated by the position of the leadership in putting forward the 1949 pay demands. The leadership advanced a 30% wage demand, not because of the needs of workers, but as part of the struggle against Communists:

"We want to avoid the danger of the mineworker being pushed down to the level of a proletarian, with all the attendant dangers of him becoming a prey to Communist influence. We want to avoid the development of a working class in the European sense, and the attendant class difficulties."¹⁸²

Initially, the MWU joined the Pretoria Co-ordinating Committee,¹⁸³ which was set up by the Nationalists as a right-wing alternative to the TLC in 1950. This move came even after the retreat of the TLC at the February 1950 conference, in a decision to deny affiliation rights to black unions,¹⁸⁴ which was aimed at avoiding precisely such break-aways. The political volatility in the situation, and the as yet limited success of Nationalist attempts to impose complete state control over the unions, was reflected in the decision of the MWU to leave the Co-ordinating Committee in September 1951.¹⁸⁵

In 1951, the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) was set up, with the MWU providing the strategic industrial core.¹⁸⁶ Both the break-away and the formation of the new Federation had the open and immediate support of NP trade union spokesmen in Parliament.¹⁸⁷ There can be little doubt that the Federation was set up because the Co-ordinating Committee was not as successfully under government control as had been intended. There may have been a division between different factions of Afrikaner nationalism behind the new Federation.¹⁸⁸ The accusation came from both the *Guardian* and some leaders of the Co-ordinating Committee that the reason for the formation of the new Federation was the failure of NP politicians to acquire total direct control over the Co-ordinating Committee. Whether that was the case or not, it represented also the underlying tension between the different class forces within Afrikaner nationalism.

It was to be expected that for some Afrikaans workers the Nationalist victory would mean that they came to rely on the government to meet their needs, rather than on their own class action or organisation. But it was not simply that content of class consciousness which militated against class action. It was also the fact that any remnant of an organised class life was being broken down - through the legislative and administrative measures taken by the government; through the political decision of the TLC to retreat; through the collapse of the LP; and through the extension of more direct state influence into the unions, through the leadership of erstwhile Nationalist agitators, who were now effectively government officials, whether

that was formally the case or not.

For a period, the electoral victory of the Afrikaner Nationalists, and the political conditions surrounding that victory, served to suppress the likelihood of class action by white workers. Where such action did develop, it was roundly condemned by the new government of capital.¹⁸⁹ As these processes developed, the CP's propaganda calls for an alliance with black workers were buried beneath the other forces at work. They were also muted by the Party's confusion as to the best approach the struggle against the Nationalist government. Should resistance be through a popular front alliance? How could black workers be drawn into such an alliance? These were questions which had been posed, as the Party set out to try to implement the peoples' front approach after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. They were posed again in the period after the 1948 election.

In this period, immediately following the 1948 election, the new Nationalist government was in an insecure position. It had only a tiny electoral majority, depending on a coalition to sustain it. It faced a series of clashes with the judiciary. Sections of the white petty bourgeoisie were organised, or willing to organise, in extra-parliamentary protest. Its political hold, even over white workers who had voted for it, was not consolidated. There were cases of action by white workers, within the civil service over which the nationalists now presided. There were divisions within the ruling class. It was in this situation that the

movement of opposition which led to the Defiance Campaign developed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1946 - 1952 (2)

The sustained forward drive of black workers had been halted by the impact of the defeat of the 1946 miners' strike and the series of expulsions and splits in the trade unions. The total membership of black unions dropped sharply. But even as these processes were developing, a new combativity within the black working class was beginning to develop. There was a series of violent clashes, in different urban areas of the country, ranging from a minor incident in January 1947 in Durban¹ to pitched battles with the police at the end of 1949 and beginning of 1950 in Newlands and Sophiatown.² The immediate causes and issues were different in different places. But all the cases of "rioting" expressed the explosive tensions which were building up in the overcrowded slums in which black workers were forced to live. In 1949, further bus boycotts in New Brighton,³ Moroka, Jabavu⁴ and a tram boycott in Western Native Township⁵ were indicators of workers' readiness to build on the experience of earlier waves of struggle, and of the widespread grievances on prices and services.

In 1944 a doctor, in evidence submitted to a government commission on the living conditions and health of urban blacks, had concluded: "The bald fact remains that the diet as purchased

is grossly deficient in many of the requirements of an adult male, still more does it fail to meet the needs of the children and the pregnant or lactating woman."⁶ The SAIRR had commented: "It might well be asked how the African worker can keep alive under such circumstances. The African workers keeps alive but not healthily alive."⁷ By 1950, these conditions for many workers and working class families had deteriorated. At the end of 1949, the prices of staples like tea, candles and condensed milk were all raised.⁸ A SAIRR survey conducted in 1950, revealed that the real wages of many black workers were declining:

"Since 1944, there has been no increase in basic wages paid to unskilled labour in the building industry, municipal undertakings, commercial and distributive trade, the motor transport industry in Johannesburg and the brewing industry there and the printing industry in Pretoria and the Reef towns.

"In Johannesburg, the minimum basic wages paid in the commercial and distributive industry were in 1944 and were still in 1950 only 1/15/0 a week, and the same amount to labourers working for the municipalities.... In the biscuit trade, the lowest basic wage is 2s 6d a week less than was paid in 1944."⁹

A letter to the Guardian from "A resident" reveals some of the mounting grievances in the black areas:

"When questioning the authorities about the high rent you are told of the stove and the few other items which most people possess themselves before moving in.

"The houses are very cold in winter and just the opposite in

summer. There is absolutely no privacy for the family because the inside walls do not reach the roof ... transport is most difficult. A bus trip from the location to the station costs 3d. The majority of the people walk to the station as they can not afford the busfare.... Because there is only one big school most children are not at school and those who are lucky go to school at Orlando, Pimville, or even far-way Sophiatown and Eastern Native Township (an additional transport burden for the family). There is only one school in Jabavu White City, but there is also a very big jail built by the government."¹⁰

These were conditions and signs of combativity which suggested that there was a growing basis for the renewal of the movement which had expressed itself in earlier waves of struggle and organisation. But neither the ANC nor the unions were able, initially, to organise or develop that rising militancy. The first attempt by the political organisations to build resistance to a move by the government - The Committee Against Apartheid in the Railways - collapsed and split almost immediately after it was formed, because of disagreements between the different political organisations represented.¹¹ In the period 1947-1951, the CNETU unions appear not to have taken a major initiative on any issue. It was only in 1951, after increasingly clear signs of rising combativity, that a campaign on a minimum wage was launched.¹² For the CP, the consistent priority in relation to the black unions was to direct them towards the TLC; the question of organising non-organised workers was a secondary priority.¹³ Developments in the black communities proceeded without the CNETU

unions assuming any clear or distinct role. Within the ANC, the priority of the CYL militants was building their own leadership, and winning support for their proposed programme. While this process was in motion, the ANC leadership was largely ineffective, unable to produce anything tangible out of an alliance with liberal whites, and divided as to how to respond to the new Nationalist government.¹⁴

But the "riots", particularly those in Newclare and Sophiatown, focussed the attention of the CYL on the mass of black workers, in a way which was similar to the move in that direction after the 1946 miners' strike. There were three important differences in 1950. The first was that the movement of workers was beginning to move into a new upsurge, whereas in 1946 the struggle which turned the CYL towards workers ended in a major defeat, with the broader impact we have seen. Secondly, in 1950, the CYL had secured far greater influence within the ANC, to the point at which their struggle for ideological and organisational control was largely won. And, thirdly, the 1948 election victory, and the measures taken and threatened by the Nationalist government, constituted a direct threat to the black petty bourgeoisie.

The cumulative effect of all these factors was that from within the CYL leadership of the ANC there were growing calls for a turn to the masses, at a time when the mass movement was beginning to develop. The CYL conference in Durban in 1950 stated: "If the masses can be properly educated and organised, we have an

instrument of liberating ourselves without bloodshed."¹⁵ Leading CYL activist G M Pitje wrote to the CYL newspaper, *African Lodestar*: "Our [task] is to revitalise and build up Congress so that it becomes the real liberatory movement it was intended to be."¹⁶ As the ANC gradually began to be turned, on this basis, towards the developing movement of black workers, the more conservative Selby Msimang expressed, as if it were fact, the aspiration of the old-guard ANC leadership:

"African leadership stands between the cheap labour market provided by the inarticulate and benighted masses of our race, and the capitalist interests.... [A]frican intellectuals have become a menace and a danger to white domination in this country.... When mobile labour can be harnessed effectively and the reserves converted to centres of great national self-expression, self-development and self-assertion, it will be the beginning of the end of apartheid and race prejudice."¹⁷

The Central Committee report to the 1949 CP conference had identified "the present favourable conditions for the growth of the Party".¹⁸ The report pointed to weaknesses in the Party structure, but continued: "Our prestige has grown. The people are turning to the Party in ever-increasing numbers.... In some Districts our Party has succeeded in gaining big influence amongst the African workers, with the result that African membership is increasing by leaps and bounds, far outstripping the rate of recruitment amongst other sections."¹⁹ The response to the 1950 May Day strike call indicates that, as far as the

receptivity of black workers to political action was concerned, the conditions had grown more favourable. In the interim, Sam Kahn had been elected as the Party's first MP.²⁰ At a general level, the Party was to express its belief that "communism can not be destroyed as long as society is divided into two worlds: rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed."²¹ The Party claimed that Communism was "gaining in strength and stature".²² But the decisions concerning the immediate future of the Party were to be determined, not on the basis of these beliefs and developments, but by the imminent passage of legislation through Parliament, and developments amongst two organised groups to which the Party looked for support for a broad front - the white unions and the black petty bourgeoisie.

When, in March 1949, the Minister of Justice announced his intention to "combat the dangerous subversives of our national life, democratic institutions and Western outlook",²³ the CP launched the Campaign for Freedom of Speech and Assembly.²⁴ This led, in March 1950, to the calling of the Defend Free Speech Convention, at which the newly-elected ANC President, Moroka, was the main speaker. The Convention called for a National Convention to be held in July, and for May Day 1950 to be "celebrated as a People's Holiday".²⁵ The response to what for workers was effectively a call for a one-day political strike, was widespread, with the Convention claiming 80% support. Groups of demonstrating workers were attacked by police in Benoni, Orlando, Alexandra and Sophiatown, with at least 19 blacks being killed.²⁶ Shortly afterwards the Unlawful Organisations Bill, later changed

to the Suppression of Communism Bill, was introduced. The Bill aimed at rendering illegal all political activity of any kind by anyone regarded as fitting into a very widely defined category of Communist.²⁷ On 7 May 1950 the Central Committee resolved to dissolve the Party from the date of the third reading of the Bill.²⁸ On 20 June 1950 the Communist MP read out a statement in the House of Assembly, announcing the dissolution of the Party.²⁹

There is a temptation, using simple logic, to explain the dissolution decision simply as the product of state attacks. Slovo does so when he writes: "The Party operated as a legal body until 1950, when it was declared illegal under the Suppression of Communism Act."³⁰ The South African Communist Party, the party that was eventually rebuilt after the dissolution of the CPSA, has tried to look deeper; the Party historians all put forward the explanation of dissolution contained in the 1962 Programme of the South African Communist Party:

"Despite its great achievements and struggles, the Communist Party of South Africa proved incapable of surviving under illegal conditions. Legalistic illusions had penetrated into the ranks of the Party, including its leading personnel. The Party was unprepared and unable to work underground. These errors culminated in the dissolution of the Party."³¹

To what extent does this argument explain the dissolution decision?

In the post-war situation, given the fact that the "progressive

forces are heartily sick of us [the CP]",³² and that Browderism had now been rejected by the Soviet leadership,³³ the Party was under pressure to seek a new approach. But what was that approach to be? When the Party first turned to Dimitrov's people's front, Gomas had identified the confusion within the Party membership about how to relate to other organisations. That confusion had reached a point where the existence of a single unified Communist Party had come under question. Now, as the Party looked for a path away from its war policy, a similar uncertainty began to manifest itself. The Party's own assessment was that "it is our weakness that the Party as a whole has little grasp of its revolutionary function".³⁴ Within the Party, there was disagreement over the relative value of work amongst blacks. Freedom commented: "A Johannesburg municipal election rouses the DPC [District Party Committee] to a height of activity which it never achieves at any other time of the year. On the other hand, elections for advisory boards in the locations pass almost unnoticed by the bulk of the Party members."³⁵

After the sedition charges following the 1946 strike, the Party lost a significant part of its membership.³⁶ It is likely that these were mainly people who had seen the Party as the most resolute supporter of the war effort in the struggle against facism. But there remained a persistent tendency within the Party which continued to see the way forward as involving a reconstructed people's front. This tendency manifested itself especially clearly, as has been discussed, in the period immediately up to and following the 1948 election. This was not a

new political approach for the Party. It can be traced back to 1924, when the bourgeois NP was seen as a progressive ally of the labour movement. It re-emerged in 1935, in a period in which the Party was willing to give up criticism of any potential allies, undermining its capacity to put forward independent answers to the political questions being posed. And it persisted, through the formal rejection of Browderism, into the post-1948 situation. The Party was faced again with the question of how to build an alliance stretching from black workers to white employers.

The report of the Central Committee to the 1950 Party Conference represents the most systematic attempt made to address a part of that question.³⁷ The report argues that "South Africa is entering a period of bitter national conflict". From that starting point, it proceeds to lay out the theoretical foundation upon which to base "the relationship between the working class and the national liberatory organisations". The report expresses a clear hostility to the leadership of the ANC and, in particular, the CYL: "We must no longer allow the bourgeois elements in the national movements to slander the Party, and to adopt a hostile or negative attitude to the international working class." "Because of its petty bourgeois character, its economic dependence on the white ruling class, and its isolation from the workers, the leadership of the national organisations tend to take refuge in negative and defeatist tactics which, for mass consumption, are wrapped in fierce-sounding revolutionary phrases." The report points to a commitment, expressed by both Xuma and Mda, for

freedom from national oppression. "But", it continues, "the people are not told what kind of 'freedom' they are to struggle for, or what is to be the content of the true democracy and just social order". Presumably, the objective is to be complete equality with the Europeans. But the 'equality' envisaged is not the equality of socialism: it is the kind of 'equality before the law'." The report criticises the "fundamental principles of the programme of action", arguing that it might suggest a form of apartheid, and that it is characterised by "meagreness and crudity".

The political limitations which are ascribed to the leadership of the national organisations are linked to their class background and position - but, at points, this is done purely descriptively. In other words, the leadership is seen as petty bourgeois, but not as reflecting petty bourgeois class interests. On the contrary, the report specifically argued that there are not important class differences, even between black capitalists and black workers:

"To be sure, no clear line can be drawn between the bourgeois and working class demands; pass laws, residential segregation, prohibition of buying land, the exclusion from employment, the whole range of colour bars, affect every section of the non-Europeans, and therefore constitute **national** issues. Moreover, since the non-European bourgeoisie is weak, no serious divergences can develop between it and the non-European working class."

As well as the above, the report states: "[T]he conclusion must

be drawn that the national liberatory organisations can develop into powerful, mass movements only to the extent that their content and aims are determined by the interests of workers and peasants."

The report is clearly seeking to address the questions facing the Party. In so doing, it serves primarily to open up those questions. If there are no separate, distinct working class interests, what is the basis for a separate working class party? If workers are to be distinguished from other classes because of the greater urgency they bring to the national struggle, why is a separate party, rather than the organisation of a faction within the national organisations, necessary? If there are distinct working class interests which have to be made primary within the national movement, how can it be argued at the same time that there are, and can be, no serious divergences between the interests of black capitalists and black workers? The report itself identifies the serious divergences which, it has argued, cannot exist between the black capitalist and the black worker. Criticising the leaders of the national organisations, the report argues: "These leaders, in reality, are 'liberal capitalists' and the 'freedom' they want is the liberty of squeezing profits out of their people."

The report also reflects a confusion about how the Communists should proceed. The Programme of Action is being attacked, at the same time as it is appearing above the signature of a leading

Communist, David Bopape.³⁸ The report argues that the "colour bar is primarily a technique of exploitation for private profit". It explains that the capitalists who claim to oppose the colour bar do so "to intensify the degree of exploitation, by increasing the supply of skilled workers, and therefore depressing skilled wages". The Party has argued previously that the conflict on this issue "means that the ruling class is divided in their attitude towards segregation, that amongst them are potential allies of the non-Europeans. The obvious thing to be done is to transform this section into active adherents of the struggle against the colour bar."³⁹ The report criticises the CYL for aiming "for the kind of equality that exists in a freely competitive capitalism"; but, immediately after the 1948 election, the Party identified the task for "progressive forces" in this way: "All democratic elements must henceforth devote themselves to the task of developing a broad democratic front to resist any attempt to attack the present rights of any section of the people and which will fight for the extension of Democracy."⁴⁰

The report, while seeking to resolve the problems posed before the Party, serves primarily, to reflect those problems. On the basis of the report, different approaches could be, and were, pursued. The most consistent of these was the attempt to build a broad anti-apartheid front. As had been the case after the Seventh Comintern Congress, the Party aimed at building an alliance of organisations. But pursuing that attempt posed increased problems in 1950. As we have seen, militancy was rising among black workers. But the extent of organisation amongst those

workers was less than it had been during the war. The Party had significant influence within CNETU, but its repeated calls on the black unions to affiliate to the TLC were largely unheeded. CNETU was declining, and its ability to lead black workers in a direction in which they were not already moving is doubtful. The Party repeatedly tried to find positive signs in the policies of the TLC, even as the organisation moved towards accepting the colour bar and, in effect, the Suppression of Communism Act. In April 1948, the *Guardian* had hopefully reported a victory for the left at the TLC conference, regarding it as "an important turning point in the history of the trade union movement".⁴¹ In January 1949 *Freedom* argued: "The reactionary leadership which has dominated the SATLC for a decade received a decided check at this year's [1948] annual conference.... Delegates from the more progressive unions were able to work together and defeat the determined efforts of the reactionaries to split the trade union movement into sections on colour lines."⁴² In May 1949, *Freedom* argued that the "heart of the trade union movement still seems sound".⁴³ But the 1950 TLC conference represented a major blow to these hopes. The conference accepted the colour bar, undermining its own independence as a workers' organisation, the possibilities of black and white working class co-operation, and the major component of CP trade union work. The *Guardian* was nonetheless positive about the lack of majority support for the Suppression of Communism Bill.⁴⁴ But, immediately after the conference, the TLC leadership moved further to the right and, while not supporting the Bill formally, made plans for what was,

in effect, their own anti-Communist blacklist.⁴⁵

In the period immediately following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the CPSA had declared its difficulty in finding "progressive sections of capital" with which to build an alliance. The attempt to uncover progressive sections of the bourgeoisie was as misconceived in 1950 as it had been in 1936. As has been discussed, the Party argued that apartheid obstructed profitability, and saw in that analysis the basis for an alliance with sections of capital. Oppenheimer was identified as a potential ally;⁴⁶ and the Party supported the attempt to enlist the support of employers for political strikes.⁴⁷ But, despite the Party's efforts, a bridge between a major employer, who benefitted from the oppression of the working class, and the exploited and oppressed workers, proved elusive.

It was from the organised black petty bourgeoisie - the social group to which the CP had been most consistently oriented since 1935 - that the Party was to receive the most severe setback to its hopes of building an alliance. This came in the response of the CYL to the May Day strike call of the Free Speech Convention, which had been initiated by the CP. Ngubane, writing in *Inkundla ya Bantu*, reflected the thinking of some within the CYL:

"The May Day demonstrations were intended to be part of a world campaign engineered by the Communists to help advance the cause of Communism and not of the oppressed African. Knowing that the African is now in a mood to challenge oppression, the Communists took advantage of this and came up with the idea of the

demonstration."⁴⁸

The CP responded aggressively to the position taken within the CYL. Under a headline "'Youth League' disrupters exposed and rejected", Inkululeko wrote:

"The people are ready to make sacrifices for their liberation - only some of the leaders are afraid. Everywhere the so-called 'Youh [sic] League' which has tried to disrupt and confuse the people, has met with defeat. Their policy was rejected, even though they made use of Mr. Ramohano. At Alexandra, after a huge crowd had listened to J.B. Marks and other Communist speakers, standing in the pouring rain, Mr. Radebe and other 'Youth League' supporters tried to hold an opposition meeting. But they remained talking to the air."⁴⁹

Despite this stance, there can be no doubt that the reaction of the CYL to the May Day call promoted a demoralisation amongst elements within the Party. Since the initial people's front turn of 1935, an orientation to the organised black petty bourgeoisie had been a persistent priority for the Party. In the post-war period, this had led to criticism from within the Party that it was simply "tailing the non-European organisations".⁵⁰ It was necessary for a writer in the theoretical journal of the CP to make clear: "In my opinion the Party has everything to gain by retaining its independence, by not allowing itself to be so closely identified with the national organisations as to lose its character as a class organisation."⁵¹

As has been discussed, the Party's theoretical perspective posed serious questions about the role of an independent working class party. And, in conditions characterised by the rise within the ANC of the CYL, any attempt by the Party to assert its character as a class organisation, and seek to build and mobilise a working class base, was the cause of a deepening of tension with another potential ally - the organised petty bourgeoisie. In the periods in which it supported mass action, the Party assumed and played the role of a pressure group within the broader opposition movement, seeking to promote within that movement an orientation to the masses and to mass organisation and action. In the 1930's the Party directed repeated calls along these lines at the AAC and the ANC. In the period after the miners' strike, that role was no longer left simply to the CP. The CYL was beginning to develop its own mass orientation. Now, in the post-war situation, the Party's major attempt to pursue the same approach, through the attempt to win ANC support for the Defend Free Speech Convention, and its limited proposals for mass action, created new problems. The CYL did not seek access to the masses through the CP. On the contrary, to the extent that the CP had any access to the masses, this was seen as a challenge to its own position by the CYL. Then how was the Party to respond? They asserted the fact that Moroka had supported the Convention.⁵² But the Party was aware of the fact that the CYL was the effective and rising leadership of the ANC.

Caught up in this situation, the Party did not make its response on the basis of the "forward march of the masses",⁵³ but most immediately on the basis of the position of the state. This was

not a new approach by the Party. It had followed the same course, for example, during the upsurge of strike action by black workers during the war. The Party leadership repeated the approach of the wartime people's front, which it was seeking to reconstruct. It based its decisions about what course to pursue on the massive setback represented by the 1950 TLC conference decisions, the legislative moves by the state, and the increasingly powerful CYL. As had been the case in the mid-1930's, the Party had begun its pursuit of a people's front alliance from a basis of disorientation and uncertainty. In the period 1935-1945 (with the interruption of 1939-1941), the Party had been willing to give up political criticism and oppose working class action, in support of its popular front priority. In 1950 the pursuit of a similar priority brought into question not only the extent to which the Party pursued independent policies, but also its existence as an independent organisation. If the national liberation struggle and the class struggle were the same thing, and the interests of all blacks the same, what was the role of a party of the working class? If the existence of an independent Communist Party was an obstacle to the construction of a broad democratic front, and Communists could promote such an alliance as individuals within other organisations, then the reasons for the existence of the Party itself were unclear.

The 1950 report of the Central Committee had not served to resolve these issues. Rather, it provided the theoretical underpinning for what was a developing crisis of orientation within the Party. As events were to show, these factors had

combined to produce a demoralised, disoriented and confused leadership, for whom the 1950 Central Committee report had provided no convincing answers. The immediate threat posed by the Suppression of Communism Bill brought this situation to the fore. Within the leadership there were three main responses. A minority were opposed to the dissolution proposal. Bill Andrews, who had taken that position, wrote to the membership:

"Remembering the path which has been blazed by our members for over thirty years and inspired by the example of such fighters for freedom as Nkosi and many others who died for their opinions, let us face boldly the renewed and perhaps more ruthless attacks which are threatened."⁵⁴

Within the majority which supported dissolution, there were those "who had come to doubt the need for the very existence of the independent Marxist-Leninist party of the working class",⁵⁵ or could not see how it could play its role. They were also those who believed that it was necessary for Communists to dissolve as a "tactical expedient".⁵⁶ These were people who believed that the Party should re-group underground, but took the dissolution decision without any preparation or clear plans as to how that should happen, or any recognition of what the impact of the decision on the broader political situation would be. The support for dissolution from this group was not simply the product of tactical thinking. Behind it lay the political approach which identified the building of broad fronts as a greater priority than the expression of a Communist identity, or saw the former as the appropriate way of achieving the goals of the latter.

In 1943, the Comintern had disbanded. The CPSA had supported that decision, and not questioned the logic with which it was explained:

"The entire course of events in the past quarter of a century, as well as the accumulated experience of the Comintern, has convincingly shown that the organisation for uniting workers chosen by the First Congress of the Comintern, and which corresponded to the initial needs of the initial period of rebirth of the working class movement, has more and more been outgrown by the movement's development and the increasing complexity of its problems in separate countries. It has even become a hindrance to the further strengthening of the national working class parties."⁵⁷[my emphasis J.G.]

The priority of the workers' movement internationally was identified as being "to support in every way the war effort...."⁵⁸ As the CPSA recognised, the reasoning behind this decision was "a desire to bring about the maximum degree of unity between the United Nations in the struggle against Hitler",⁵⁹ i.e. the maximum degree of unity between the "progressive forces" against the fascists. At that time, the CPSA had justified the dissolution decision by pointing to propaganda which "falsely accused the Communist Party of subordinating the interests of the people of South Africa to 'the dictates of Moscow'." The Party argued that the dissolution decision would expose "the real nature of this propaganda".⁶⁰

In 1950, the CPSA found itself in a situation with basic

similarities. As we have seen, there had been propaganda which accused the Party of subordinating the needs of the African people to the plans of international Communism. The antagonism which its separate existence and independent activities generated stood as an obstacle to the goal of the Party - the construction of a peoples front against Afrikaner nationalism - "local fascism", in the Party's view. The Party followed the same logic it had supported in relation to the Comintern, and, now threatened by the Suppression of Communism Bill, reached the same conclusion concerning its own existence.

The CP historians all criticise the dissolution decision, in the terms agreed by the South African Communist Party in its 1962 programme. This explanation both begs the question, and describes, rather than explains. The Party had not proved incapable of working underground - it chose not to try to. The extent to which the legalistic illusions of the leadership extended into the ranks of the Party, especially the black workers who had been joining in unprecedented numbers, has to be questioned. Working class daily experience demystifies parts of the law, making clear that it has its meaning not simply as a decision of Parliament, but in the real clash of social forces out of which the law emerges, and in the context of which it is or is not implemented. Part of the legalism of the leadership was reflected in the fact that the decision was finally announced in Parliament, having been taken without any consultation with the Party membership.⁶¹ Neither the 1962 programme nor the Party historians make any attempt to identify the source of these

legalistic illusions, the point at which they emerged, the process by which they arose, or the extent to which they affected other aspects of the Party's work and analysis.

In explaining the dissolution decision in the descriptive approach which they employ, the CP historians ignore both the underlying disorientation of which the illusions were a product, and the impact of those illusions on the broader political process. The histories dealing with the period point to the continuing militant role of Communists like Dadoo. They argue that by 1953, the Party had been reconstituted underground, re-organising itself as the South African Communist Party.⁶² In doing so, they appear to presume, without explanation, that the legalistic illusions which they have identified, have disappeared.

The effect of the dissolution decision, however, was to promote misconceptions of the state and state power which existed within the black petty bourgeoisie - and were to be expressed at critical points in the unfolding of the Defiance Campaign. In 1950, the CP acquiesced to the law as if, through its imminent passage through parliament, the content of the law was immediately translated into a social reality. In the event, because of the decision of the CP, this is what happened, until the Party was reconstituted, despite the law. The dissolution decision reflects the assumption that the state has the capacity to impose its law, simply because it is the law. Earlier in this

study, it was observed that the liberal approach to law was to call for it to be obeyed - because it was the law. During the course of the Defiance Campaign, that position was to be taken further, by a minority of liberals. The law was now to be defied - but the punishment of defiance accepted. When a law was passed which specifically outlawed defiance, that promoted the belief, amongst some of the Campaign leadership, that the defiance could no longer proceed. The CP position was not the same as that of the liberals - but it promoted a similar result. The law was in one case to be obeyed because it was a moral good either to do so, or to accept the consequences of not doing so; in the other, the law was to be obeyed because the power of the state to implement it was assumed; in both cases, although in different ways, the professed reason for obeying the law was - because it was the law.

In the course of the Campaign, its leadership came up against the questions posed by an attempt to pursue a mass orientation, and a developing confrontation with state power. The CP, both because of its dissolution, and the underlying disorientation which promoted the dissolution decision, removed its capacity to put forward clear answers to those questions.

At the 1948 conference of the ANC, the Programme of Action of the Youth League had been referred back for discussion.⁶³ During the course of 1949, the CYL stepped up its campaign to secure the leadership of the ANC. A CYL statement in June 1949 declared: "The leadership and rank and file of the CYL are seething with the spirit of revolt against the Congress Old Guard.... Down with double-dealing and opportunism."⁶⁴ At the 1949, Mbonambi for the CYL expressed their criticism: "Congress is not making any progress.... it failed to give and lead to the African peoples on the burning issues facing them such as housing, unemployment and the pass raids."⁶⁵ At that conference, the CYL largely secured the organisational and ideological victory for which it had been campaigning within the ANC. Sisulu was elected Secretary General, the Programme of Action was accepted, and Xuma was replaced by Moroka, as a result of organised CYL pressure.⁶⁶ In February 1950, the ANC National Executive met, and appointed the Council of Action which the Programme of Action called for.⁶⁷ The CYL had been opposed not to demonstrations and strike action on May Day per se, but to the fact that these were not under CYL leadership, nor in strict accordance with the ANC Programme of Action. The mass response to the May Day strike call accelerated the turn to the masses by the CYL which was already in motion. On May 14 a widely-based conference, attended by the ANC, SAIC, APO, CYL, CNETU and Communists, was held to discuss co-ordinated action and, a week later, the ANC executive called for a strike on June 26. There was generally wide support for the strike call, although there were regional differences. A complete stoppage was

reported at Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Durban, Ladysmith, Evaton and Alexandra. There were partial stoppages on the Witwatersrand, Bloemfontein, Grahamstown and Cape Town, amongst other urban areas.⁶⁸ The 1950 Draft Report of the National Executive of the ANC later described the response in the Transvaal as "very poor." It attributed that response to poor field-workers, and intimidation during May Day.⁶⁹ There can be little doubt that an added factor was the impact of the division between the CYL and other organisations which had been manifested during the May Day strike.

In June 1951, the ANC and the SAIC agreed to the Defiance Campaign, and a Joint Planning Council (JPC) was set up, and met for the first time on July 29. This Council was made up of two members from each organisation, with Moroka chairing.⁷⁰ In November the JPC reported, and its report was accepted by the ANC Conference in December, and by the SAIC shortly afterwards. It was agreed to hold a series of meetings in different parts of the country on April 6, 1952 (to coincide with the Van Riebeeck tercentenary) and to launch the first acts of defiance some time after that. The April 6 meetings had enormous attendances and, at the end of May, the ANC/SAIC Executives met, and agreed to launch the Campaign on June 26.⁷¹

In the same period, there was considerable political activity and organisation amongst Coloureds. This was stimulated most immediately by the introduction of the Separate Representation of Voters Bill.⁷² The Franchise Action Committee (later Council) (FAC)

was set up to resist the Bill and agitate for the extension of the franchise. The FAC was responsible for the calling of a protest strike, in the Cape, on 7 May 1951.⁷³ Basil Davidson wrote: "The strike was a marked success. In a tour of the industrial suburbs of Cape Town early on Monday morning, I saw factory after factory with its gates fast closed; while in other factories which I also saw there was only a sprinkling of workers present."⁷⁴

The success of the strike promoted calls for a widening of the action, and a speeding-up of the preparation for the Defiance Campaign. An FAC meeting in Worcester called for "a general country-wide strike for full rights and votes for everybody, and called on the leaders of the people to meet at the earliest possible moment to plan for national resistance to the oppressive laws."⁷⁵ In October 1951, the Namakwalandse Volks Kongres was set up under the influence of, and closely linked to, the FAC.⁷⁶ And in March 1952, the Coloured Trade Union and Political Action Committee was set up to cover Johannesburg and the Reef, again under the influence of, and closely linked to, the FAC.⁷⁷ Thus the FAC effectively became an umbrella organisation, establishing organised links between the Coloureds in the urban and rural areas of the Cape and the industrial centres of the Transvaal. The FAC became the third wing of the Defiance Campaign leadership.

The government reacted to this series of developments before the Campaign was actually launched. It targetted the "agitators"

without whom, in its judgement, the masses would not be able to build unified protest action. The Suppression of Communism Act was used against opposition leaders. In May 1952, Kotane, Marks, Bopape, Ngwevela and Dadoo were ordered to resign from their organisations, and were prohibited from attending political meetings. Kahn was expelled from the House of Assembly.⁷⁸ The Guardian was banned, after a series of threats going back to 1950. The beginning of the Campaign was effectively brought forward when key leaders decided to defy the May restriction orders.⁷⁹ In June, the Campaign was extended, with a Day of Volunteers on the 22nd.⁸⁰ Groups of volunteers started undertaking defined acts of defiance from June 26, going into prohibited areas - usually post-offices and railway property.⁸¹ By October, 5,000 defiance volunteers, including key Campaign leaders, had been arrested.⁸² Up until that stage, it appeared that the Campaign was closely following the three stages in terms of which it had been conceived: propaganda, individual selective defiance, mass action.⁸³

But, from October, the blueprint began to be disrupted. Mass action began to develop, but in the form of rioting in a number of centres - Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Kimberley, East London.⁸⁴ At the same time, a group of white liberals became directly involved in the Campaign, basing themselves on a widely publicised statement calling for political reforms which had been published in September. This was followed by a public meeting of white supporters of the Campaign in November and, on December 8, Patrick Duncan became the first white to be arrested for his

involvement in the Campaign.⁸⁵

From the apparent highpoint in October, the Campaign appears to have moved into a downward spiral. After the first major violent clashes in the Eastern Cape, the local ANC leadership reacted to the pressure for mass action, and called a regional general strike. There were calls from within the ANC locally for an indefinite general strike. Moroka intervened, with the effect of obstructing these, and substituting a call for a one-day protest strike.⁸⁶ This had widespread regional support. But it was regionally isolated, and the government and employers unleashed a campaign of victimisation against leading militants.⁸⁷ In November, regulations were gazetted providing for three hundred pound fines, and three-year prison terms for defiance action. These regulations were incorporated early in 1953 into the Criminal Laws Amendment Act, which made it a crime to break the law in protest against it. Soon afterwards, the Public Safety Act of 1953 was introduced; which effectively allowed the government to declare a state of emergency without referring the matter to Parliament.⁸⁸ Both of these Acts were speedily passed by the Nationalists, who had just been re-elected with an increased majority.⁸⁹

As the repression mounted - in the form of direct police attacks, arrests, victimisations by employers, and raids and bannings through the course of the Campaign, and the measures taken in accordance with the Suppression of Communism Act, then the two

Acts mentioned above - the Defiance Campaign ground to a halt. Clearly the repression was the immediate cause of the dissipation of the Campaign. But there were underlying uncertainties in the conception of the Campaign, and underlying divisions within its leadership from the outset of the Campaign. These came to the fore, as the necessity for clear answers concerning the direction of the Campaign was posed by events. As the struggle unfolded, both the threat and the reality of state repression were there. But the state was provided with conditions created by the uncertainty and division within the Campaign itself, which made it easier for the repression to be carried through and become effective.

Before the Campaign began, there was an unprecedented, albeit slow, process of preparation. This was clearly reflected in the level of publicity, organisation and national co-ordination involved in the April 6 meetings. It was carried through into the calling of special ANC Provincial conferences to discuss and prepare for the campaign.⁹⁰ This level of preparation was facilitated by an apparently high degree of common purpose, both between different organisations, and between different political tendencies within organisations. J Matthews, Transvaal CYL secretary wrote in *Spark*: "Nobody, from extreme left to conservatives argued against mass action. The debate centred around details of action and not on the fundamental need for action."⁹¹ Events were to show that that unity could not be sustained under the challenge of the developing political conflict. But even before the beginning of the Campaign, despite

both the level of preparation and the degree of apparent unity, there were crucial divisions within the ANC. These were most importantly reflected at the 1950 national conference, and in the Transvaal and Natal. In the Transvaal, provincial elections in 1950 in which Marks became President were suspended, under pressure from a group around Seloape Thema, and also sections of the CYL.⁹² In Natal, Champion, for individualist opportunist reasons, held back information about the Campaign from other provincial leaders. This, together with the low level of democracy which made it possible, meant that Natal was out of phase with the rest of the country as far as preparations were concerned; it led to Luthuli raising objections to the timing of the Campaign.⁹³ At the 1950 ANC national conference, there was a big clash between Moroka and the CYL. The issue was the delay of Moroka and Z K Matthews in resigning from the NRC. Moroka declared that he would not be treated as a "fixture", and that he would only pursue a course which he had satisfied himself about. The Guardian reported: "There were times when divisions were so wide on the floor of the house that one almost expected a feast of fisticuffs any moment."⁹⁴

These tactical pre-Campaign problems were compounded during the actual unfolding of the campaign. The flimsy unity was largely maintained until violent clashes developed and the blueprint began to be disrupted. All groups of the Campaign leadership declared their opposition to the rioting.⁹⁵ This rioting opened up great problems for the leadership at a time when, according to

the plan, there had to be a turn to mass action. Benson writes of "Letele's misery" because the rioting had happened "in the middle of the Defiance Campaign, destroying so much of the ANC's work, just as they had won so much support."⁹⁶ Clearly, Letele had in mind white opinion, not the support of those who were clashing with the police. Apart from the division between the rank and file, caught up in that mass action, and the leaders who saw it as disrupting their plans, the rioting also opened up a division between those in leadership who were simply reluctant to see mass action developing, and those who supported mass action provided it developed within the control of the Campaign leadership.

The gap underlying the apparent unity of the leadership was most graphically revealed in the December trial of Moroka and others, in which his open attack on Communists thinly disguised an attack on aggressive mass action in general.⁹⁷ These gaps were deepened by the overt intervention of the group of white liberals, which began to have a growing impact on the direction of the Campaign towards the end of 1952. The effect of this was to draw parts of the ANC leadership away from any attempt to develop mass action, and towards the attempt to move forward through the support of influential individuals. At the same time, parts of the Campaign leadership began to turn towards the forthcoming elections, expressing the continuing hope that the struggle against oppression could be promoted through parliament and through the parliamentary political parties. That hope was expressed by the call of Dadoo for a vote for the UP.⁹⁸ The orientation towards parliament constituted a powerful pressure against support for

any action which might 'provoke' the white electorate.

Some elements within the leadership continued to call for the development towards organised mass action. In February 1953, Spark expressed their thinking:

"The great spirit and bravery which has been aroused in the Defiance Campaign must be mobilised and raised to a higher level. New forms of struggle, involving the entire masses of the democratic population, must be evolved to meet this critical emergency."⁹⁹

The same month, a youth rally of 8,000, in Alexandra "unanimously and amidst thunderous applause" backed the call for a national stoppage of work, and for the intensification of the Defiance Campaign.¹⁰⁰ Spark declared: "From the Cape, from the Transvaal, and from all parts of the country, the people feel that conditions are ripe for the next big step forward - THE NATIONAL STOPPAGE OF WORK."¹⁰¹ As will be discussed, these calls came at a time when conditions were less favourable than they had been since 1950.

For those who supported the orientation expressed by Spark, the problem posed was how to develop from the second stage of the Campaign to the third. Apart from repeated expressions of the need for such a development, the problem brought to the fore a basic uncertainty which had existed at the outset of the Campaign. According to Lerumo, "[t]he Defiance Campaign was not designed to end the system of white supremacy by the sacrifice of its victims; it was seen as an effective form of training and mobilising disciplined volunteers in non-violent action...."¹⁰² It

is possible that there were individual leaders of the Campaign who saw it in that way. But it is also clear that amongst some of the militant supporters of the Campaign, including some Communists, it was seen differently.

Kanyisa, of the CYL, writing in *Inkundla ya Bantu* had expressed the initial approach, under the headline "Malanites are scared pale":

"Dr. Moroka has told the world that he stands for a general strike against oppression The Non-Europeans realize today that if the African downed tools, oppression, Malanism, apartheid would all come down tumbling into the rubbish bin.... The leaders of the ANC are heading straight for jail. That finest moment in every peoples history is approaching and Africa will soon pass through jail fighting for his freedom.

"Soon we as a people shall have the honour of being bound in chains and humiliated because we stand for a free Africa.... Africa will triumph in the end and an African will be Prime Minister of the Union."¹⁰³

J. Ngwevela, Chairman of the Cape Western Region of the ANC told the *Guardian*: "People are aware that they must suffer for their liberation and they understand that it is by unity and by carrying out the decisions of their national organisation that they will reach their goal."¹⁰⁴

Dawood Seedat of the Natal Indian Youth Congress had told a

meeting on Colonial Youth Day: "I want to warn the puny fascists of our country that it will not be long before their day is over. The camp of Peace and Progress is far greater than the camp of reaction and warmongers."¹⁰⁵

This was the basis on which important sections of the militants within the Campaign made their assessment of how to deal with state power, and how to relate to the masses. It expressed both the rhetoric of public political platforms, but behind that, an idealised vision, in terms of which the masses would respond to calls from their leaders, and major political concessions, generally unspecified, would be won. Those who operated in terms of this idealised vision had a tendency to believe that the masses were more or less permanently receptive to calls to action; the vision also obstructed any full assessment of the process by which mass action could win demands. What was seen as the initial success of the first two stages of their Campaign could only serve to compound the misconceptions of this group. **Spark** declared: "April 6 has indeed been the greatest silent process of the oppressed in South Africa. This is only the first round. No amount of threats on the people or intimidation of their leaders can stop the second round."¹⁰⁶

The April meetings reflected two different, although interlocking processes. The first was the process, whose origins pre-dated the Programme of Action and the Defiance Campaign, of the development of rising combativity amongst black workers. The second was the

process through which sections of the black petty bourgeoisie - partly because of that rising combativity - were moving to the left. By their response to the calls to action which came out of the Defiance Campaign, workers were indicating their willingness to participate in collective expressions of grievances. The most co-ordinated and extensive specifically working class action which developed during the Campaign - the Eastern Cape strike - was the result of a mass mood and mass experience, which did not conform to the blueprint in terms of which the Defiance Campaign was conceived. At times, the Campaign tapped and channelled the receptivity amongst workers. But it neither created it, not controlled it.

In the actual course of events, the Campaign was not initiated and developed at the same pace as the rise of working class combativity. It lagged behind these. The National Executive of the ANC partly recognised this, in its report to the 1950 ANC conference.

"The year 1950 was a turning point in the political history of the African people in this country. It was marked by a number of events which took place from the beginning of the year. These events indicate a new political outlook on the part of the African people. The events showed quite clearly that the conditions under which the African people live have become intolerable and that the masses are marching far ahead of the leadership."¹⁰⁷

But the ANC leadership did not respond to its own assessment. It took three big political strikes over more than a year, and the

open response to a series of political meetings, and still an additional three months, before the leadership formally called into being a previously agreed campaign of defiance. The same lag is evident in the way in which thousands of people at the April 6 meetings were sent home before the leadership organised its call for volunteers.¹⁰⁸

This lag behind the pace of the rise of working class combativity meant, even within the terms of the Campaign itself, that the problems which it faced were compounded. The Nationalist government was given a period of time in which the developing mood of combativity was not generally expressed in an organised way against it. In this time, the government was, in part, able to deal with some of the factors making for its instability. In particular, it was left relatively free to move against the white unions, and the Campaign was eventually launched in conditions in which the government was on one level stabilising its position and consolidating its political base. The calls for mass action from sections of the Campaign leadership only began to escalate after the momentum of the Campaign had been lost; repression at different levels had taken its toll, not simply within the formal Campaign, but within the broader workers' movement; the regional strike had been isolated; and the government now had new laws on the statute book, and a growing confidence, promoted by its electoral victory and its victories over the CP and the white unions, to use them.

In formulating the Programme of Action, and developing the idea

of the Defiance Campaign which, in part, arose out of it, there was the recent history of struggle, within the experience of the CYL, from which to draw lessons. Within that history there had been the Alexandra bus boycotts, the Sofasonke movement, the 1942/43 strike wave, and the 1946 strike. These struggles were an important part of the political foundation upon which the rise and development of the CYL occurred. It is true that the rise of the CYL reflected the general rise in militancy of the working class. Similarly, the rise to dominance of the CYL within the ANC reflected the growing social weight of the urban working class. The Programme of Action was a codification of the policies of the CYL - and this programme was connected with the increased militancy and strength of the working class. But there were substantial differences between the Programme of Action - representing the movement to the left of the petty bourgeoisie - and the development of the movement of the working class. The developments in the workers' movement were not directly reflected in the Programme of Action. Rather, within a context characterised by those developments, the Programme of Action partly reflected the way in which those developments were mediated for the petty bourgeoisie, through its own political ideology and experience. To the extent that it drew on the experiences of mass struggle, the Programme of Action reflected the way in which the petty bourgeoisie understood those experiences. As a programme it arose out of, and reflected, the petty bourgeois conception of the need to draw workers into a struggle according to a blueprint which has been worked out and

approved by the politicised petty bourgeoisie.

This perspective has been seen in the timing of the Campaign. It is demonstrated most clearly in the political role which the Programme played, rather than in its abstract content. Although the formal acceptance of the Programme only came in 1949, decisions at the 1946 ANC conference suggest that it had already begun to be developed.¹⁰⁹ By 1948, it had been developed into a more systematic plan. For the first period of its development, at a time when, largely beneath the surface, combativity was beginning to rise again, the Programme was not used nor conceived as an instrument through which to relate and attempt to develop that rising combativity. Despite its formal content about mass struggle, it was developed primarily as a codification of political ideas for the internal debate within the ANC. The CYL had a declared and developing orientation towards the masses; but in reality, the early development of the CYL revolved around an internal power struggle within the ANC - in which the question of an orientation to the masses was an issue - rather than an attempt to actually pursue a mass orientation. This is clearly demonstrated in the way the CYL, despite its political commitment to mass struggle, had not attempted to build a mass youth organisation. It had seen itself, and acted, as a pressure group. Its priority was to win ideological support for its declared position within the organised petty bourgeoisie. It was only when that support was won that there was any attempt to act out the content of the Programme.

Once the CYL came to dominate the leadership of the ANC, the actual political nature of the orientation to the masses which the Programme expressed was revealed in the static formalism with which it was employed as a guide to action. It was the CYL's view which had been expressed in initial resolutions dealing with the JPC report,¹¹⁰ and the CYL and its allies in the Indian Youth Congress played a major role in the initial development of the Campaign. The campaign was to be based, finally, on mass action. But the timing of this was to be determined by developments within the Campaign, not amongst the masses. This had meant, for example, that the Defiance Campaign was still being prepared, even while there was mass defiance action already being taken by workers - against forced removals;¹¹¹ in opposition to rent increases;¹¹² in the struggle against bus and tram fare increases.¹¹³ The 1950 protest strikes and the meetings in April 1952 provided overwhelming evidence on their own terms that the leadership of the Defiance Campaign could call on mass support. But they still stuck with their original formula, being moved to adapt to events only when individual leaders were subjected to banning orders, and chose to defy them. Behind all of this, whatever may have been the subjective intentions of those involved, there is revealed the consistent conception of the masses as more or less active supporters, not as actors in their own right. Even where there was a subjective commitment to a mass orientation, an instrumentalist conception of the masses served to undermine that orientation, promoting an objective turn away from the working class - the reality of working class life, struggle and

consciousness.

At any one time during the course of the Campaign, there were workers using resources of tactical skill and ingenuity to avoid being arrested by the police. As has been discussed earlier, there is a permanent defiance campaign being conducted by the working class.¹¹⁴ Every day, hundreds of thousands and even millions of workers were breaking laws. The necessity of doing that was unavoidably imposed on sections of the working class. But the crucial thing for workers was to be successful in that defiance. The formalised Defiance Campaign did not, however, base itself on this reality of working class life. It must surely have been strange, and definitely have run counter to the forms of action which workers were likely to have chosen, to embark on a campaign of breaking laws, which aimed specifically to fail in defying them at their point of application. There may be conditions in which it is necessary for the working class to impose the need for mass arrests on the state. But the strategic and tactical thinking behind the Campaign was not directly or clearly based on such an assessment. As we have seen, there was a degree of uncertainty about what the precise goals of the Defiance Campaign were, or how precisely they would be won.

For the working class, the meaning of bourgeois law is derived, first and foremost, from the real experience at the point of application. That is partly why, inside the working class, there can be a spontaneous grasp of the fact that the law is the result of the clash of social forces, not of decisions in parliament,

even if there are material pressures which act against a conscious understanding of that fact. In everyday experience, where workers are defying laws, even when the workers' movement generally is in retreat or unorganised, the defiance is directed against the law at its point of application.

The Sofasonke movement illustrates these points. It was a movement which turned the individual acts of defiance against the pass laws into a unified and organised resistance. It successfully broke the pass laws by targetting the application of those laws in a specific case. It can not be deduced from this that there is automatically something wrong with an attempt to make decisions of parliament the focal point of struggle. Such a deduction would rule out a range of struggles which the working class, in different circumstances, has fought and has had to fight. But it does mean that, if such a struggle is to draw the support of the working class, it has to take account of the experience of workers, and the fact that workers are already engaged in a struggle against bourgeois law at its point of application.

Where the Defiance Campaign did focus on laws at their point of application, it did so by a sending in a selected band, which effectively substituted itself for the mass of workers. According to the blueprint of the Campaign, this first substitution was necessary - as a step which would provide the basis for educating and later mobilising workers. The decisions of the Campaign did

not reflect the experience or knowledge that the mass of workers already had, taking account of the focal points of the working class defiance which already existed. Thus it was that individuals would select a site where workers were not in daily defiance - a post office, or a railway waiting room - and go in as an isolated group of protestors. In this process, the mass of workers could only be spectators, even while there were millions of workers who lived in, and moved to, areas where they were not legally permitted, and "squatted" illegally, and housed family and friends who were not on housing permits, amongst other acts of defiance. The campaign made workers spectators in confrontations whose precise goals were often unclear. Nonetheless, the confrontations were real, and they provided the state with conditions in which it could use its repressive power against groups of activists who had willingly isolated themselves to court arrest. It is not clear - nor was it clear to the participants - what the precise impact of the Campaign on the state was intended to be, or how precisely that impact would be achieved. For some in the leadership of the Campaign, there can be no doubt that it was merely a modernisation of the historically recurrent attempts to threaten the government into reforms. For others, there was a clear belief that the Campaign could win substantial victories, a belief which, in the way in which it was expressed and pursued, reflected an idealisation of the masses and state power.

At times, a combination of the strength of mass action and the subjective commitments of those who hold an instrumentalist

conception may be strong enough to suppress its necessary outcome. But, under the pressure of events, a gap will be opened up between the actual development of the workers' movement, and the vision of the way forward which is opened up through an instrumentalist perspective. In some periods, as we have seen, this may take the form of a search for a section of the masses which better conforms to the idealised misconception. (Hence, for example, the orientation of elements within the NEUM away from the urban workers to the peasants.) At other times, it may take the form of action in which bands of "politicised people" are used as a substitute for what are seen as the passive masses. This was a course which the CYL, in time, was actually to follow. In the Defiance Campaign, the basic perspective of the CYL led to the attempt to develop a campaign which was based on a substitution; it required the mass of workers to be supporters and spectators and adopted abstract focal points when the workers' struggle had already identified a series of concrete targets. Because of this, the CYL was in a weak position to combat the way in which more conservative elements within the ANC saw the masses.

It was at the point at which the problem of how to move from the second to the third phases of the campaign was being most sharply posed - and bringing to the fore the divisions and uncertainty which were located in the foundations of the campaign - that the government took decisive action. It was in these conditions that the repression of the state was stepped up, and achieved its

results.

The Campaign played a major part in promoting the development of political organisation. At its highpoint, the developments within and around the Campaign had created a mass ANC, with a membership in the region of 100,000,¹⁵ and with influence which went far wider through the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. Lerumo points to the "growing preponderance" of youth and workers within the ANC after the Campaign.¹⁶ In this chapter, I have tried to show that behind the radicalism of the Defiance Campaign, there were two connected, but different, processes - the development of the radicalism of the CYL, and the development of the combativity of the oppressed and exploited black working class. The processes were both reflected in the Defiance Campaign, and in the growth of the ANC which followed. But they were developing at different paces, involved different political focusses, generated different forms of action, and did not automatically follow the same path.

The CP historians tend to portray the Defiance Campaign primarily as a further chapter in the development of an increasingly radical national movement. In the process, they conflate the two different processes which we have seen, merging them into a single process of developing radicalism. The promotion of working class radicalism and petty bourgeois radicalism are abstracted from the conditions in which they occur; the common demands which, in part, they lead to, are identified; and the coincidence of developments in two different classes is conflated. The process is not dissimilar to the way in which, in very

different conditions, a much less theoretically sophisticated CP saw the visit of Gumede to the Soviet Union as a "manifestation of the revolutionising of the masses".¹¹⁷ Bunting focusses on the radicalism of different leaders within the Campaign, and the "cross-pollination between the Communist Party and the national movement."¹¹⁸ In doing so, he does not mention, even within the context of the Campaign, the Eastern Cape strike, and he argues that the riots were "unconnected with the defiance campaign". Lerumo's central analytical point is that the Defiance Campaign was "not designed to end the system of white supremacy by the sacrifice of its victims".¹¹⁹ Slovo repeats this point, and argues that, although the Defiance Campaign was defeated, it taught valuable lessons.¹²⁰ The latter point has been extended by leading Congress of Democrats member, Ben Turok. He argues that the Campaign succeeded in its "subjective goals", "to highlight for the country as a whole and not least for the Non-Whites themselves, that the system of discrimination was unjust and oppressive", and "to overcome fear of authority, build an oppositionist attitude among the Black people and raise political consciousness to a higher level."¹²¹ The Campaign itself is seen as the proof of its own success, in Turok's terms. But, as we have seen, the Campaign lagged behind rising combativity, at times tapping a receptivity to organisation and collective action which had already been created by working class experience of the fact that 'the system of discrimination was unjust and oppressive', as well as one which promoted their exploitation.

The experience of the Campaign served to deepen the turn to masses, whose origins we have seen, by the CYL. The evidence of mass receptivity to political action and organisation played the same role, in promoting that process, that the 1946 miners strike and the 1950 "riots" had done. In 1952, J. Matthews reflected the increasingly conscious recognition by the CYL of the need to build mass organisation:

"Mr A.P. Mda who is probably the chief architect of the ANCYL once said that the task of the Youth was to transform the ANC from an organisation of a few urban gentlemen with clean hands into a militant peoples' movement. In the past few years the ANC has become a mass movement, as was shown by the representatives at the National Conference in 1951. More than half the delegates consisted of people closely connected with the trade unions, notably those from the Transvaal and Cape"¹²²

At the 8th Annual conference of the CYL in 1952, the same concern was expressed: "Mr. Mji urged the League to 're-orientate ourselves.' The membership of the League had been mainly drawn from a certain section of the African youth. 'The time has come when the organisation must be placed on a mass basis'."¹²³ He argued that the youth "must regard the organisation of workers into strong trade unions as priority no. 1. Until we have a conscious solid working class movement it will become increasingly difficult to continue our struggle as our enemies change their tricks from day to day."¹²⁴

For the CYL, the Campaign was successful, in that it secured its

authority within the ANC, and won a level of mass support for that authority. In that sense it was a crucial part of the processes through which the CYL established its political dominance within the petty bourgeoisie, and began to build a base which extended firmly into the working class. The CYL had entered the Campaign with a growing belief in the need for an orientation to the masses. That belief had been strengthened. It had also opened up a question to which the CYL had not yet developed a consistent and comprehensive answer: how was the recognition of the need for such an orientation to be translated into the practice of that orientation?

Sections of the working class rallied to the banner of the ANC through the course of the Defiance Campaign - the only nationally organised forum in which basic political demands were being taken up. There can be little doubt that, given the thousands of workers who responded to the calls of the ANC, there existed the real potential in the period for the development of independent working class organisations. Similarly, there existed the potential for the political interests of the working class to be more powerfully represented in the alliance with the oppressed petty bourgeoisie. That potential existed some time before the Defiance Campaign. But, given the lack of independent working class organisation from which it started, the nature of the mass orientation of the Campaign leadership, and the repression directed at working class action, the combativity of workers was not, in itself, sufficient to realise that potential. The actual

process of the Campaign promoted this situation. In fact, one of the features of the Campaign was the lack of scope for mass participation in decision-making. This meant that the support of workers was a component of the Campaign but there was neither an independent organisational base, nor democratic channels in the actual struggle, for that component to have clear independent expression. At the same time, the rise of combativity which turned some workers towards the Defiance Campaign was, amongst many many more, being dissipated into many isolated acts of defiance, for which there was no immediate outlet, other than spontaneous action, and the informal organisation which developed around it. The Campaign extended the influence of the militant, organised petty bourgeoisie within layers of the working class, and further consolidated the CYL orientation, on the basis that we have seen, to the masses. In the period of struggle which followed, workers did build independent organisation, and struggle against more clearly defined targets. The momentum for this came, as had the initial receptivity to the calls to action of the Defiance Campaign, from the fact that workers will respond to their own experience, and the conditions of their own lives, with the search for collective organisation and action. It came - because the search by workers for the day that "the sun shall rise for the workers"¹²⁵ is itself a part of history.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. 'Manifesto of the Communist Party of South Africa adopted at the Cape Town conference on July 30-31 and August 1, 1921', in South African Communist Party, *South African Communists speak, 1915-1980*, London, Inkululeko Publications, 1981., pp.62-65.
2. *Guardian*, 22 June 1950.
3. A. Lerumo, *Fifty Fighting Years: The South African Communist Party 1921-1971*, London, Inkululeko Publications, 1971.
4. H.J Simons and R.E. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969.
5. B. Bunting, *Moses Kotane, South African revolutionary*, London, Inkululeko Publications, 1975.
6. E. Roux, *Time Longer than rope: A history of the black man's struggle for freedom in South Africa*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.; E. Roux, *S.P. Bunting, a political biography*, published by the author, Cape Town, 1944.
7. A. Brooks, 'The Communist Party of South Africa between 1940 and 1950', Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, 1970, unpublished.; A. Brooks, 'From class struggle to national liberation - the Communist Party of South Africa, 1940-1950.', M.A. dissertation, University of Sussex, 1967.
8. S.W. Johns III, 'Marxism-Leninism in a multi-racial environment: the origins and early history of the Communist Party of South Africa, 1914-1932.', PH.D dissertation, Harvard University, 1965.; S.W. Johns, 'The birth of the Communist Party of South Africa', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. IX, No. 3, 1976.

9. A.J. Southall, 'Marxist theory in South Africa until 1940', MA dissertation, University of York, 1978.
10. B. Hirson, 'Land, labour, and the 'Black Republic'', mimeo.
11. M. Legassick, 'Class and nationalism in South African protest: the SACP and the "native republic", 1928-34', Syracuse University, New York, 1973.
12. See inter alia M Legassick, 'Capital accumulation and violence', *Economy and Society*, 3 March 1974.; M. Legassick, 'Legislation, ideology and economy in post-1948 South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, October 1974.; M. Legassick and H. Wolpe, 'The Bantustans and capital accumulation in South Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 7, 1976.
13. See inter alia H. Wolpe, 'Industrialisation and Race in South Africa', in S. Zubaida (ed), *Race and racialism*, London, Tavistock Publications, 1970.; H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid', *Economy and Society*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1972.
14. See F.A. Johnstone, 'Class conflict and colour bars in the South African gold mining industry', *The societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries*, University of London collected seminar papers, vol. 1, 1970.; F.A. Johnstone, 'White prosperity and white supremacy in South Africa today', *African Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 275, 1970.
15. See inter alia R. Davies, D. Kaplan, M. Morris, D. O'Meara, 'Class struggle and the periodisation of the state in South Africa', *Review of South African Political Economy*, September-

December 1976.

16. S. Clarke, 'Marxism, Sociology and Poulantzas's theory of the state', *Capital and Class*, no. 2, 1977.; S. Clarke, 'Capital, fractions of capital and the state. "Neo-Marxist" analyses of the South African state', *Capital and Class*, no. 5, 1978.
17. D. Innes and M. Plaut, 'Class struggle and economic development in South Africa: the inter-war years', *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries*, University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies Collected Seminar Papers, vol. 9, no. 24, 1979.; D. Innes and M. Plaut, 'Class struggle and the state', *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 11, 1978.
18. D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: class, capital, and ideology in the development of Afrikaner nationalism 1934-1948*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.
19. See inter alia, J. Lewis, *Industrialisation and trade union organisation in South Africa, 1924-55: The rise and fall of the South African Trades and Labour Council*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.
20. See inter alia the collection of studies in B. Bozzoli (ed), *Town and countryside in the Transvaal*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983.
21. The approach is reflected in the tendency to use "trade union movement" and "labour movement" coterminously. See inter alia J. Lewis, 'The new unionism: industrialisation and industrial unions in S.A., 1925-1930', in E. Webster (ed), *Essays in Southern African labour history*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1978.
22. Lewis, *Industrialisation and trade union organisation*.

23. See for example the discussion of strategies of the trade union left in J. Lewis, **Industrialisation and trade union organisation**, pp.162-172.
24. South African Communist Party, **South African Communists speak, 1915-1980**, London, Inkululeko Publications, 1981. The selection of documents for publication is in itself revealing of the Party's approach to its own history.
25. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.609.
26. See Lerumo, on Gumede, op. cit. p63.; Bunting, on the Congress Youth League, Moses Kotane, p.138.
27. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.609.
28. Lerumo, op. cit. p.72.
29. Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.80; Simons and Simons, op. cit. p.496.
30. Lerumo, op. cit. p.91.
31. SACP, op. cit., Introduction to Section 2, p.68.
32. J. Slovo, 'South Africa - no middle road', in B. Davidson et. al. **Southern Africa: the new politics of revolution**, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977., p.156.
33. See Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.55, passim.
34. See D. Hemson, 'Are migrant workers a sub-proletariat? The dockworkers of Durban', mimeo.; R. Fine, 'Post-war resistance in South Africa', mimeo.
35. Ibid., p.4.
36. See editorial in the **International**, 1 June 1923.
37. See 'Resolution on 'The South African question' adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International following

the Sixth Comintern Congress', in SACP, op. cit. pp. 91-97.

38. Ibid. p.96.

39. See E. Roux, S.P. Bunting, a political biography, op. cit. for a sympathetic account of Bunting's work and ideas.

40. See below, p.86.

41. See below, p.106.

42. See below, p.244.

43. See below, p.460.

44. See below, p.86.

45. See below, p.94.

46. In the third period, the LP was regarded as social fascist. See Umsebenzi, 15 May 1931.

47. See below, p.350 and p.391.

48. C. Kadalie, My life and the ICU. The autobiography of a black tarde unionist in South Africa, London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1970.

49. I.B. Tabata, The Awakening of a people, Nottingham, Spokesman Books, 1974. See also, inter alia, A. Luthuli, Let my people go, Glasgow, Collins, 1962; D. Mokonyane, Lessons of Azhikwelwa: The bus boycott in South Africa, London, Nakong Ya Rena, 1958; N. Mokgatle, The autobiography of an unknown South African, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971; Z.K. Matthews, Freedom for my people, Cape Town, D. Phillips, 1984

50.T. Karis and G.M. Carter, From protest to challenge. A documentary history of African politics in South Africa, 1882-1964, in four volumes.

Vol.1: S. Johns, Protest and hope, 1882-1934, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1972.

Vol.2: T. Karis, *Hope and challenge, 1935-1952*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1973.

Vol.3: G.M. Gerhart, *Political profiles, 1882-1964*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1977.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Rosa Luxemburg, 'Either/or', in **Selected writings of Rosa Luxemburg**, New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1971, p.337.
2. This was based on formal acceptance of the positions of the Second International, adopted at the Basle and Stuttgart conferences. See H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, **Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950**, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969, p.179; also: South African Communist Party (SACP), **South African Communists Speak: Documents from the History of the South African Party 1915 - 1980**, London, Inkululeku Publications, 1981, Introduction to Section 1, pp.1-2.
3. SACP, op. cit., Introduction to Section 1, p.2; 'The Labour Party's Duty in the War, a Reply to the "See It Through" Policy, Signed by Twenty members of the South African Labour Party', *ibid.*, p.5; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.179.
4. *Ibid*; see also 'Extracts from "Keeping the red flag flying": An address to the SA Labour Party', pamphlet published by the War on War League (SA) in March 1915', SACP, op. cit., p.3.
5. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.180.
6. Creswell left as a major and returned a colonel.
7. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.180; see also 'Keeping the red flag flying', *loc. cit.*, p.3.
8. See SACP, op. cit., Introduction to Section 1, p.2. The journal was "closed down by the censor at the end of November", after 13 editions.
9. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.184.

10. See *International*, 10 September 1915; also SACP, op. cit., p.3.
11. Ibid. p.3.
12. He produced a pamphlet, which came to be known as the "See it through manifesto". See E.A. Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, Cape Town and London, Oxford University Press, 1957, p.564; SACP, op. cit., p.3; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.183.
13. The voting was 82 to 30. *International*, 10 September 1915; See Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.183; SACP, op. cit., p.11; 'The Labour Party's duty in the war, a Reply to the "see it through" policy, signed by twenty members of the SALP', SACP, op. cit., p.5, for the reply of the anti-war opposition to the 'See it through manifesto'. Both were produced in preparation for the special conference.
14. *International*, 10 September 1915.
15. *War on War Gazette*, 19 September 1914, cited in SACP, op. cit., Introduction to Section 1, p.2.
16. See below, p.57 ff.
17. *International*, 1 October 1915.
18. Ibid.
19. *International*, 14 January 1916.
20. Ibid.
21. *International*, 17 March 1916.
22. *International*, 19 May 1916.
23. See Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.190.
24. *International*, 27 October 1916 and 10 November 1916.
25. The tendency to assume that the labour movement consists of

organised workers, and that the best organised workers are therefore the vanguard of the working class occurs consistently in the work of many analysts; for example: J. Lewis, *Industrialisation and Trade Union Organisation in South Africa, 1924 - 1955: The rise and fall of the South African Trades and Labour Council*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

26. *International*, 7 December 1917. See A. J. Southall, 'Marxist theory in South Africa until 1940', M.A. dissertation, University of York, 1978, p47. He stresses this approach of the CPSA, pointing out that in 1918, the *International* compiled a summary of quotations from more than 20 different articles, "to prove that the League believed that Blacks should be organised because of white workers' self-interest."

27. *International*, 3 December 1915.

28. *International*, 21 January 1916.

29. *International*, 3 December 1915.

30. The opposition had been expressed before the formation of the League, as the 1915 elections approached. See 'The Labour Party's duty in the war', loc. cit., p.8: "It is the Labour Party's duty, not at all hazards to win the next elections, but to stand firm through every evil report to the principle of peace and international goodwill and to the identity of interest of the international working class in war and peace."

31. *International*, 26 November 1915.

32. *International*, 21 January 1916.

33. See *International*, 25 February 1916, for a strong attack against the policy of 'No politics within the Union'. The position argued is confused: "The Party of the workers, when they

again revive in class consciousness we trust will be their own industrial organisation, now functioning industrially, now politically.... The ISL for instance will gain its first success, not when it gets Trade Unions affiliated to it, but when it is able to affiliate to the political body of the organised working class."

34. *International*, 25 February 1916.

35. See S. Johns, 'The birth of the Communist Party of South Africa', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol IX, No. 3, 1976.

36. *International*, 9 February 1917, 18 May 1917.

37. De Leon's ideas start appearing in the *International* from the edition of 21 January 1916.

38. See *International*, 12 November 1915, for a letter from the Social Democratic Party (Durban) which makes a clear statement of opposition to any form of "White Labour Policy".

39. "Orientation to the black worker" in the context of the ISL does not mean an exclusive or even necessarily a primary orientation. It represents a firm commitment to approaching the issue of the black worker as well as that of the white.

40. In the 19 May 1916 edition of the *International*, a letter from "A Socialist" expresses the attitude of paternalism which existed within the League:

"[W]ith regard to the marriage question, the socialist objects to mixed marriages not because of colour or through inherent snobbery, but for the same reason that he would shudder at the union of the child of 10 with the adult of 60 ... in a socialist

community the place of the Natives, by reason of their limitations, would necessarily be set in a certain fixed groove or confined area - their ignorance of the usages, customs, refinements and habits of modern civilisation would unfit them to take ... a share ... of citizenship".

In this crude form, racist paternalism was not shared by the foremost leaders of the ISL. But a form of paternalist attitude existed, and persisted into the formation of the CP. In a report presented to the Executive of the Third International on 29 March 1921, Ivon Jones wrote:

"[I]n spite of it all [the hardship and exploitation], the Bantu is a happy proletarian. He has lovable qualities. 'His joy of life and fortitude under suffering' to quote Lafargue's words on the negro: his communal spirit, his physical vitality, his keen desire to know, despite his intellectual backwardness, makes him an object of lurking affection to the whites who come into contact with him." Quoted in SACP, op. cit., p.51.

41. *International*, 1 October 1915.

42. *International*, 12 January 1917.

43. *International*, 10 March 1916.

44. In 1917/1918, secondary industry employed 124,000 workers, of whom 78 000 were African: D. Innes, and M. Plaut, 'Class struggle and economic development in South Africa: the inter-war years', Institute of Commonwealth Studies seminar paper, 1977, p.5. The ratio of white to black miners in 1915 was 1:9.01 (*Union statistics for fifty years*, cited in R.H. Davies, 'The 1922 strike on the Rand and the political economy of South Africa', mimeo, 1978. Houghton uses *Union Statistics for Fifty Years* as

the basis for a figure, in 1921, of 894,000 African men and 252,000 African women as "economically active in the modern sectors of the South African economy". The African total of 1,146,000 Africans compares with the total of 540,000 whites. See D.H. Houghton, *The South African Economy*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1964, p.159.

45. *International*, 18 February 1916.

46. *International*, 25 February 1916.

47. *International*, 17 March 1916.

48. *International*, 7 April 1916.

49. *International*, 25 August 1916.

50. *International*, 11 August 1916.

51. *International*, 28 July 1916.

52. *International*, 7 January 1916, on the Van Rijn strike.

53. See for example *International*, 16 February 1917: "Let us not invent 'biological facts' to excuse our remissness in reaching the natives."

54. See *International*, 10 December 1915.

55. *International*, 6 October 1916.

56. *International*, 1 May 1917.

57. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.198.

58. Transvaal Native Congress leader.

59. See *International*, 9 June 1916, for favourable response to speech by Msane.

60. *International*, 16 March 1917.

61. In January 1917, Wade stood in a Parliamentary bye-election in Troyeville and polled 72 votes. *International*, 2 February

1917. In the Provincial Council elections of 1917, Andrews polled 355 votes in Benoni, and Bunting 71 in Commissioner Street. *International*, 29 June 1917.

62. *International*, 5 October 1917.

63. *International*, 6 July 1917.

64. *The International*, 7 January 1916, reacts to the Van Rijn strike, and later visible action by black workers. When no such action is visible, the League invariably reacts to what seems 'visible' - the lack of organisation amongst black workers. See *International*, 8 November 1918: "Now in South Africa, though the masses have developed a considerable degree of consciousness of the increasing disabilities of the native races, they cannot truly be said to have attained as yet class consciousness, still less are they organised as a class for social revolution.... This backward or unequal development in the proletariat makes the movement here more complicated than in a European country on the one hand or a pure Asiatic on the other."

65. In the *International*, 16 March 1917, a series of articles begins, aimed at proving that "the native is equally capable".

66. Roux, S.P. *Bunting - A political biography*, Published by the author, Cape Town, 1944, p.39.

67. *International*, 8 June 1917.

68. *International*, 29 June 1917.

69. *International*, 13 July 1917.

70. *International*, 29 June 1917.

71. *International*, 20 July 1917.

72. *International*, 7 July 1916.

73. F.A. Johnstone, A. 'The IWA on the Rand: socialist organising

among Black workers on the Rand, 1917-1918', p249; E. Roux, **Time longer than rope: a history of the black man's struggle for freedom in South Africa**, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1964, p.130 passim.

74. See **International**, 3 August 1913: "'Organise and educate' is a more practical thing applied to natives than to white workers in South Africa. At the very first of a series of gatherings of natives to study the working class movement the point was seized: asked what they wanted they replied: 'Si funa konke' - we want everything."

75. Johnstone, 'The IWA on the Rand', p.253.

76. Ibid., p.259.

77. Published in the **International**, 15 February 1918.

78. See **International**, 13 February 1918; also F.A. Johnstone, **Class race and gold: a study of class relations and discrimination in South Africa**, London, 1976, p.173.

79. Johnstone, 'The IWA on the Rand', p.261.

80. Ibid.

81. See **Star**, 5 June 1918.

82. See **International**, 7 June 1918; A.T. Nzula, I.I. Potekhin, and A.Z. Zusmanovich, **Forced labour in colonial Africa**, Edited and introduced by R. Cohen, London, Zed Press, 1979, p.207; Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.130.

83. **Star**, 10 June 1918, 12 June 1918, 13 June 1918, 28 June 1918.

84. Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.131.

85. "'Communism in South Africa" by David Ivon Jones, presented to the Executive of the Third International on behalf of the

International Socialist League of South Africa", SACP, South African Communists speak, p.52.

86. Johnstone, Class race and gold, p.174 passim.

87. Star, 29 June 1918.

88. Star, 1 July 1918.

89. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.208.

90. Star, 2 July 1918.

91. Karis and G.M. Carter (Eds), From protest to Challenge. A documentary history of African politics in South Africa, 4 Volumes. Vol.1: Protest and hope 1882-1934 by S. Johns III, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1972. Vol.2: Hope and challenge 1935-1952 by T. Karis, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1973. Vol.3: Challenge and violence 1953-1964 by T. Karis and G.M. Gerhart, Stanford, 1977. Vol.4: Political profiles 1882-1964 by G.M. Gerhart and T. Karis, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1977.

See '"Pass law resisters, native case stated". Report on interview with I. Bud Mbelle, J.W. Dunjwa, and P.J. Motsoakae of the South African Native National Congress, April 1, 1919 (Published in The Star)', ibid., Vol.1, p.106, the interviewees being "three natives, who, to a great extent must be regarded as responsible for the present local movement among their compatriots".

92. Ibid. "[T]hey said they would insist on order being maintained by their people. They had formed a group of special constables ... there were to be no shouts of threats.... In the case of arrest, ... they must submit quietly, and must go to gaol. No picketing had been authorised...."

93. See C. Kadalie, *My Life and the ICU*, London, Frank Cass and Co, 1970. p.40.
94. See 'Address on disturbances in Bloemfontein location, by I.J. Nthatisi, March 4, 1919 (Published in *The Friend*)', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, p.104.
95. *Star*, 31 March 1919, 2 April 1919, 3 April 1919, 4 April 1919; See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.117 passim.
96. See Kadalie, op. cit. pp.41-44.
97. See Nzula et al, op. cit., p.207; 'Communism in South Africa', SACP, op.cit., p.53.
98. *Star* 20 February 1920.
99. Ibid.
100. Simons and Simons, op. cit. p.231.
101. 'Communism in South Africa', loc. cit., p.53.
102. *Star*, 21 February 1920, 23 February 1920, 24 February 1920, 25 February 1920, 26 February 1920, 27 February 1920.
103. *International*, 1 March 1918.
104. *International*, 15 February 1918.
105. Quoted in Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.133; See 'Communism in South Africa', loc. cit., p.53.
106. *International*, 15 March 1918.
107. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.232.
108. Johnstone, 'The IWA on the Rand', p.251
109. Ibid., p.254.
110. Ibid., p.255.
111. *International*, 7 January 1916.
112. The suggestion that they did do so is contained, although

not explicitly, in Lerumo's discussion of the "errors of analysis and emphasis" of the ISL. See Lerumo, A. *Fifty fighting years*, London, Inkululeko Publications, 1971, p.46.

113. 'Policy of the League', *International* 14 January 1916; 'International socialism and the Native', *International* 7 December 1917.

See *International*, 18 February 1916, where Bunting argues that this would come about because it was useful to "the exploiting purposes of the masters"; see also the article by Andrews, *International*, 20 July 1917. Referring to black workers, he proposes: "Civil equality that he may function as a wage-worker in co-operation with his fellows. All special laws based on race must be abolished." Notwithstanding this, the article is extremely ambiguous and ambivalent about the issue of a non-racial franchise.

114. *International*, 19 October 1917.

115. *International*, 12 October 1917.

116. *International*, 19 October 1917.

117. Johnstone, 'The IWA on the Rand', p.251.

118. *International*, 9 March 1917.

119. Reporting the 1918 NNC conference, *International* wrote:

"With the congress decision to send militant natives' representatives to Parliament in the Cape and to press for the vote elsewhere no one can quarrel for the workers have forced them to form themselves into a definite native nationalist party; but a grave error was committed in failing to give attention to the one weapon the ruling class fear - the organisation of the native workers."

120. See *International*, 12 October 1917, for a response along these lines to the warning from Abantu Batho against collaboration by blacks with white labour.

121. *International*, 13 July 1918.

122. See Lerumo, *op. cit.*, pp.42-47.

123. See 'Manifesto of the Communist Party of South Africa adopted at the Cape Town Conference held on July 30-31 and August 1 1921', in SACP, *South African Communists speak*, p.62.; Johns, *op. cit.*

124. 'Manifesto of the CPSA', *loc. cit.*, p.62

125. 'Communism in South Africa', *loc. cit.* p.56.

126. See S. Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement? The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa', *Protest and power in black Africa*, ed. R.I. Rotberg and A.A. Mazrui, New York, 1970, p.703. T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, London, Macmillan, 1978, p.180, where it is claimed it was in May

127. Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, Vol.1, Introduction to Part Three, p.154.

128. The Act was based on the 1917 Native Administration Bill. See Davenport, *op. cit.*, p.176, for a description of the measures introduced by the Bill. The central features were the establishment of an annual conference of African leaders nominated by the government, and a Native Affairs Commission (all-white).

See 'Testimony of J.Tengo Jabavu, before the Select Committee on Native affairs, June 15, 1920 (Published in *Minutes of Evidence, Select Committee on Native Affairs*)', Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*,

- Vol.1, p.110, for representations made to the Select Committee.
129. See Davenport, op. cit., p.180; Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement', p.703.
130. Archive of the Native Labour Bureau, "Rioting at Village Deep", memo for the Board of Managment, quoted in P.L. Bonner, 'The 1920 black mineworkers strike: a preliminary account' in B.Bozzoli (Ed), **Labour, township and protest**, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1979, p. 288.
131. The premium on the pre-war price of 85s per ounce had fallen from 42s to 19s. E.A. Walker, **A History of Southern Africa**, Cape Town and London, 1957, Longmans, Green and Co, p.589. See I.L. Walker and B. Weinbren, '2000 casualties: A history of the trade unions and the labour movement in the Union of South Africa', Johannesburg, 1961, SATUC, p.103 passim, for a detailed argument on the economic case made by the Chamber.
132. Davenport, op. cit., p.193; See D.Innes, **Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa**, London, Heinemann, 1984. pp. 81-83.
133. Walker, op. cit., p.589; R.H. Davies, 'The 1922 strike on the Rand and the political economy of South Africa', mimeo. 1978, p.18.
134. T. Boydell, **My luck was in**, Cape Town, Stewart, 1947, p.191; Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.101. 10,800 of the 1,100 whites on the coal mines were dismissed on 26 January 1922, after they refused to accept a wage cut. Ibid., p.100.
135. The voting was 12,792 to 1,336. Ibid., p.105.
136. On 12 January, the AEU called for a strike of "all organisations of labour". Hessian, op. cit., p.27. The SAIF rejected a

call for a general strike on 4 February. Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.102. See Hessian, op. cit., p.67, for reference to a speech by Thompson on 12 February when he argued that there was not enough support for a general strike.

137. See W.H. Andrews, *Class Struggles in South Africa*, Cape Town, Stewart, 1940, p.33.

138. Ibid.; also Davies, op. cit., p.19; Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.117.

139. Ibid.

140. N. Herd, *1922: The revolt on the Rand*, Johannesburg, 1966, p.47; Andrews, op. cit., p.34.

141. Ibid, p.35.

142. Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.132. He was Piet Erasmus, a miner with 30 years' service, and in the second stage of miners' phthisis.

143. Herd, op cit., p.32.

144. Hessian, op cit., p.145: "Another trade union official suggested that commandos should consist of members of a trade or occupation which formed a Union.... In outlying areas like Krugersdorp, trade unions did get control of local commandos ... [but] the really big commandos like Fordsburg, Jeppe and Boksburg remained regional and independent of the trade unionists." It is possible that the point was being made to emphasise that the commandos were independent of the leadership of the trade unions.

145. Andrews, op. cit., p.35.

146. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p. 294, point out that "It

[the general strike call] met with less response on the Rand than the general strike of 1914, and was virtually ignored in the rest of the country." They follow the SAIF leadership in arguing that the SAIF seriously called for a general strike in January, and the problem was a lack of response from the rank and file. The reality was somewhat different. The SAIF at no stage put forward a precise call for a general strike, nor did it campaign for, or seek to organise, such a strike. By the time the call was made, two months had passed with little or no direction from the SAIF.

147. On 6 February 1922, there was a meeting of Labour and Nationalist MP's and MPC's which unanimously rejected the calls made in Springs on 4 February, for the setting up of a Republican provisional government. Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.106; see *ibid.*, p.119, for the response of the Cape Federation.

148. The strike was officially ended by the SAIF on 18 March 1922.

149. Herd, op. cit., p.22.

150. Hessian, op. cit., p.27.

151. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.284.

152. *Ibid.*

153. Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.119.

154. Walker, op. cit., p.591, states that: "In 1910 little more than one-quarter of the white miners on the Rand had been South African born, in 1921 rather more than half."

155. *International*, 20 July 1917.

156. Lerumo, *Fifty fighting years*, p.51.

157. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.281.

158. "'The Fight to a Finish", manifesto issued by the Communist

Party to striking workers of the Witwatersrand on January 30, 1922', SACP, **South African Communists speak**, p.69.

159. See Walker and Weinbren, *op. cit.*, pp.118-122 and pp.133-5, for a record of clashes between blacks and whites during the strike. Despite their opposition to the "hou die kaffir in sy plek" approach, they reveal a clearly racist attitude to black workers.

160. SACP, *op. cit.*, p.68.

161. Cited in Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.276.

162. *International*, 2 June 1922.

163. Held on 4,5 and 6 February. See Walker and Weinbren, *op. cit.*, p.107.

164. *International*, 10 February 1922, cited in Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.287.

165. *International*, 13 January 1922, cited in Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.281.

166. CPSA, **South African Communists speak**, p.68. Simons and Simons, breaking up the quote, imply that it was the "white standard" which was to be swept away. The full quote, the position of the Party on the industrial colour bar, and the tendency to call for the end of capitalism as the immediate solution in a variety of situation all suggest that it was not the "white standard" that had to be swept away.

167. All the CP historians emphasise this point, suggesting that it was the Party's statement of opposition to the "White South Africa" slogan. This is carried to a clear distortion in the most recent history. See note 37 above. Given its obtuseness, it can

not have served to challenge any racist attitudes, in the actual course of the struggle.

168. See *International*, 10 February 1922, cited in Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.286. The Party called the commandos "the Red Guards of the Rand" and praised them for enrolling in the Red Army, under the Red Flag, "which alone can ennoble war and bloodshed."

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. See Lewis, *Industrialisation and trade union organisation*, pp.29-30; Innes and Plaut, 'Class struggle and economic development in South Africa', pp.6-9; Andrews, *Class struggles in South Africa*, p.37, who all make the point from different starting points.
2. See R. Davies, D. Kaplan, M.Morris and D. O'Meara, 'Class struggle and the periodisation of the state in South Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, No.7, 1976, p.2 passim.
3. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p.29.
4. *Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa* No.6, 1923, p.330.
5. Andrews, *op. cit.*, p.37.
6. The membership affiliated to the SAIF fell from 60,000 to "barely 2,000". Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa*, p.321. The organisation was replaced by the short-lived Association of Trade Unions of South Africa, then the Co-ordinated Employees' Organisations, then the South African Association of Employees' Organisations. See *Forward*, 19 March 1926.
7. In Bloemfontein the LP share of the vote rose from the 1921 election level of 27.6% to 32.1 in 1924; on the Witwatersrand the figures were 38.5% to 43.6%; in Johannesburg from 25.7% to 32.7%; in Cape Town from 26.8% to 31.5%; in Pietermaritzburg from 40.7% to 57%. Figures derived from A. Stadler, 'The Party system in South Africa, 1910-1948', Ph. D. thesis for the University of the Witwatersrand, 1970, Table 4.
8. *International*, 30 November 1923.

9. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.305.
10. International, 5 October 1923 and 12 October 1923; see also Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.308.
11. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.360.
12. International, 27 April 1923.
13. SACP, South African Communists speak, p.76; '"A helot's bill of rights", editorial in The International, June 1, 1923', SACP, op. cit., p.72.
14. International, 27 April 1923.
15. International, 18 April 1924.
16. International, 11 April 1924.
17. International, 2 February 1923. This was before the Pact was formally agreed.
18. International, 11 April 1924.
19. International, 18 April 1924.
20. 'Election Manifesto', in International, 16 May 1924.
21. International, 16 May 1924.
22. International, 25 April 1924.
23. International, 11 January 1924.
24. 'Report of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of South Africa', International, 4 May 1923.
25. Andrews, op. cit., p.37.
26. Lerumo, op. cit., p.52.
27. International, 16 March 1923, quoted in Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.279.
28. International, 18 January 1924.
29. See International, 2 November 1923 and 18 January 1924, and

Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.308.

30. Ibid.

31. *International*, 2 November 1923; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.308.

32. *International*, 30 November 1923.

33. *International*, 30 November 1923 and 18 April 1924.

34. Kadalie supported the Pact, and was instrumental in getting the 1924 ANC conference to do so. See Kadalie, C. *My life and the ICU: the autobiography of a black trade unionist*, London, Frank Cass and Co, 1970, p58. It seems that the position he put forward was not adopted by the preceding 1923 ICU conference. This had decided: "This organisation resolves unreservedly to dissociate itself from any political body whatever...." Ibid., p.56. Kadalie appears to have acted unilaterally in calling for support for the Pact on behalf of the ICU at the 1924 ANC conference.

35. *International*, 18 April 1924.

36. See *International*, 4 January 1924 and 11 January 1924.

37. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.303.

38. See 'Report of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of South Africa' in the *International*, 4 May 1923.

39. 'Editorial note', SACP, op. cit. p.80.

40. *International* 23 May 1924.

41. See Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, p.408. The national percentage vote of the LP was 12.5, up from 10.7 in 1921. The percentage share of both the NP and the SAP dropped. On the Witwatersrand, the percentage vote of the LP went up from 38.5 in 1921 to 43.6 in 1924. See Stadler, op. cit., Tables 1.1b and 1.4. I have not been able to measure the extent to which the

increased LP vote came from previous NP voters. It is likely that a significant part of the LP vote was derived from NP supporters; in terms of the Pact, the LP was allowed to fight the great majority of the Witwatersrand seats.

42. See D. O'Meara, 'Analysing Afrikaner nationalism: The Christian-national assault on white trade-unionism in South Africa 1934-1948', **African Affairs**, Vol.77, No. 306, p.3. Lewis follows O'Meara in making this point. *Op. cit.*, p.69; nonetheless, the fact that some white workers were voting LP because the NP called on them to do so should not be overlooked.

43. See R. Davies, 'The 1922 strike on the Rand and the political economy of South Africa', mimeo, p.24 *passim*.

44. The formation of state-owned Iscor in 1928, for example, provided both jobs, and state control over access to them.

45. 'Prime Minister's Circular No.5', dated 31 October 1924. See **Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 9, 1926-1927**, pp.202-203.

46. *Ibid.*, p.203.

47. **Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 8, 1925**, p.210.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Davenport, *op. cit.*, p.362. See also **Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 9, 1926-1927**, p718.

50. Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.301.

51. See Davies, *op. cit.*, p25; see also **The Report of the Economic and Wage Commission, UG14/1925**. The Commission was divided as to whether a colour bar should be legislated.

52. Houghton, *The South African economy*, p.150; *Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No.10, 1927-1928*, p.211. An amendment in 1924 removed the restriction on apprentices joining trade unions.
53. See *Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 9, 1926-1927*, p.224. Under the provisions of the Act, where no registered union existed, it was possible for application to be made to the Wage Board by "bodies which satisfy the Board as to their representative status." It thus opened up the possibility for a form of state recognition of non-registered (black) trade unions.
54. In the historically crucial Determination of 1942, for example, the determination provoked opposition from private employers, Municipal employers, the government, and black workers. Some black workers struggled to ensure that the full determination was paid - others to attempt to win a higher increase than it provided for.
55. *Forward*, 19 March 1926.
56. *The International*, 5 January 1923, contains a critique of the then Bill, with no mention of the exclusion of blacks. In different circumstances, the CP was to call for the inclusion of blacks under the terms of the Act.
57. See K. Luckhardt, and B. Wall, *Organise or Starve! The history of the South African Congress of Trade Unions*, London, 1980, pp. 104-106.
58. Andrews, *op. cit.*, p.37.
59. There were 116,231 members of registered unions in 1926. *Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No.10, 1927-1928*,

p.208. The total represents formal measured membership - it can not capture what proportion of that membership was in any way active or committed to the union, or the attitude of non-unionised workers. The numbers of white men and women "economically active" in the "modern sectors of the economy" in 1921 were 451,000 and 89,000. Houghton op. cit., p.159. In 1924/25 there were 41,000 whites employed in manufacturing. Ibid., p.119. The "poor white problem" was recognised by the government as "constituting one of the greatest social problems of the Union." **Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 9, 1926-1927**, p.202.

60. Andrews, op. cit., p.41.

61. Forward, 19 March 1926.

62. Andrews, op. cit. p.43.

63. Forward, 19 March 1926; Andrews, op. cit., p.43.

64. These included the Engine Drivers, Miners, and Municipal Workers. Ibid.

65. The strength of the left, in terms of leadership positions, was of a minority of a minority - the industrially organised.

66. See **International**, 13 June 1924.

67. See Southall, 'Marxist theory in South Africa until 1940', MA dissertation, University of York, 1978, p.52.

68. **International**, 13 June 1924, 20 June 1924, 27 June 1924 and 4 July 1924.

69. Ibid.

70. See Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.199. A minority had supported a primary orientation to white workers, especially

Afrikaners.

71. '"Young Communist Notes", report published in **The International**, November 23, 1923', SACP, op. cit., p.74.

72. See **International**, 2 May 1924.

73. See p.102 passim.

74. Report on Native Affairs to the Party Conference, December 1924. Quoted in 'Editorial note', SACP, **South African Communists speak**, p.80.

75. 'Draft Communist Party Programme adopted by the Party conference on December 30, 1924, for submission to the branches', SACP, op. cit., p.82.

76. All population statistics, unless stated otherwise, are derived from Bureau of Statistics, Rep. of South Africa, **Urban and Rural Population of South Africa 1904-1960**. Report no. 02-02-01. The figures are thus official figures, which exclude those living in the urban areas illegally.

77. **South African Worker (SAW)**, 2 July 1926. (The **International** changed its name to **The South African Worker** from the edition of 1 January 1926.)

78. **SAW**, 17 September 1926. See Nzula et al, **Forced labour in colonial Africa**, pp.69-77, for an examination of conditions facing labour-tenants, squatters, and agricultural workers at the end of the 1920's.

79. See Department of Statistics, **Handbook of Agricultural Statistics: 1904-1955**, p53. Mealies produced by "Natives in the Reserves" fell from 3,997,000 bags in 1923 to 2,907,000 in 1924 and 2,428,000 in 1926.

80. See **Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 14**,

1931-1932, p.203. The wages of "native labourers" employed by the South African Railways and Harbours fell from an average of 19/- per week in 1921-22 to 17s 1d in 1928-29.

81. Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No.10, 1927-1928, p.962.

82. See R. Haines, 'The opposition to General Hertzog's segregation Bills: 1929-1934', (Students') Development Studies Group, Conference on the history of opposition in Southern Africa, Johannesburg, 1978; Walker, op. cit., p.619; Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, Introduction to Part 3, p.147.

83. Hertzog proposed both to release additional land to black ownership, and to legislate an absolute ceiling. Davenport, op. cit., p.337, points out that land was eventually released on the basis of Trust Tenure, rather than individual purchase: "Trust tenure was precarious and prevented the emergence of a new class of African kulaks or rich peasants, by rigidly adhering to a combination of communal grazing and one-man lot agriculture". An effect of this was to enforce the power of some chiefs, through their control over land distribution.

84. In 1929, there were approximately 12,000 African voters, compared to 410,000 whites. Walker, op. cit., p.630; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.661.

85. Educational and property qualifications entitled some blacks to "exemptions". Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.116, argues that the "exemption certificate was in point of fact only another sort of pass to be shown and did not exempt its bearer from the rough demand of the police". Nonetheless, there can be little doubt

that blacks regarded the difference as important. (The national pass laws had not yet been extended to the Cape - see Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', p.709.)

86. See Walker, op. cit., p.624; Haines, op. cit., p.154.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, Introduction to Part 3, p.147.

90. See P. Walshe, *The rise of African nationalism in South Africa: The ANC 1912-1952*, London, C Hurst and Co, 1970, p.180. Mahabane proposed a resolution protesting against the Representation of Natives Bill, calling for a round table conference of Europeans and Africans. The chair refused to accept an amendment from Ndobe, calling for a one-day general strike and mass demonstrations if the government refused to respond.

'Report on the proceedings of the Annual Conference of the African National Congress, in Umteteli wa Bantu, May 3, 1930', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, p.309.

91. For the response of the ICU to the Hertzog Bills, see 'Resolutions of demonstration against the Prime Minister's Native Bills, 1926 (Mimeographed, 2 pages)', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, p.326.

92. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.66.

93. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope*, p.156. See also Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', p.704; H. Slater, 'A fresh look at the ICU: the case of Natal', mimeo., p.2.

94. *International*, 11 January 1924.

95. *Ibid.*

96. Lerumo, *Fifty fighting years*, p.52, suggests a CP involvement in the ICU from its formation. The position in the *International* at the time of the 1924 ICU conference casts doubt on that suggestion.

97. See Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.319.

98. *International*, 4 January 1924.

99. In the course of 1924, the ICU spread to Johannesburg, Durban, and Bloemfontein. See H. Bradford, '"A taste of freedom": Capitalist development and response to the ICU in the Transvaal countryside', B. Bozzoli (ed), *Town and countryside in the Transvaal: Capitalist penetration and popular response*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983, p.133; Sheridan Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', p.711; Roux, *Time longer than rope*, pp.157-160. Kadalie declared that the "ICU spread like a veld-fire over South Africa". Kadalie, *op. cit.*, p.221. See H. Slater, 'A fresh look at the I.C.U: the case of Natal', mimeo, p.2.

100. See Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', p709.

101. *International*, 15 August 1924.

102. *Ibid.* Thomas was Colonial Secretary in the Labour Government, and also general secretary of the Railwaymen's Union. It is ironic that, while the CP took that view, Kadalie himself clearly regarded J.H. Thomas as a prestigious dignitary. See Kadalie, *op. cit.* pp.63-64, on his meeting with Thomas in Durban.

103. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.354.
104. I am unsure whether la Guma became General Secretary before or after he joined the CP. He joined the Party in the course of 1925. See Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.4, p.53.
105. See, 'Revised Constitution of the I.C.U., 1925 [Extracts]', in Karis and Carter, op. cit., pp. 325-6.
106. The name of the Party paper was changed from the **International** to the **South African Worker** at the beginning of 1926. See **SAW**, 1 January 1926.
107. **SAW**, 19 July 1926.
108. **SAW**, 6 August 1926.
109. See **SAW**, 2 July 1926; 6 August 1926; 15 October 1926; 7 January 1927; 25 February 1927.
110. After the coup under Chiang Kai Shek on 20 March 1926, the Chinese CP was in an organised bloc, under the leadership of the nationalist bourgeoisie, under conditions laid down by that section of the bourgeoisie. The CP was pledged not to criticise the doctrines of Sun Yat Sen; it was compelled to give a list of its members to Chiang; it was compelled to stop its members becoming heads of any Kuomintang or government department; and in all important committees its membership was restricted to one. See C.L.R. James, **World Revolution, 1917-1936**, London, Hyperion, p.245 and pp.249-250. These restrictions, agreed to by the Chinese Party under the class alliance policy of the Comintern, served to politically disarm the organisation, and greatly weakened its capacity to resist the major defeats which were suffered in Wuhan and Shanghai. Ibid., p.261.
111. Andrews, op. cit., p.52, recounts how, in 1927, he addressed

a meeting of ICU members, urging them to learn the lessons of the Chinese revolution.

112. See **SAW**, 2 July 1926.

113. Ibid.

114. **SAW**, 15 October 1926.

115. **SAW**, 6 August 1926.

116. Ibid.

117. **SAW**, 17 June 1927.

118. Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', p.724.

119. Ibid.; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.358; Luckhardt and Wall, **Organize ... or starve!**, p.43.

120. See Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.358.

121. Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', p.723.

122. See 'Revised Constitution of the I.C.U.', Karis and Carter, op. cit., p.325. Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', p.706, questions whether the Communists had any influence in the adaptation of the preamble, as has been suggested by Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.168. By 1925 the Communists clearly had influence within the ICU.

123. See M. Woodhouse and B. Pearce, **Essays on the history of Communism in Britain**, London, New Park, 1975.

124. S. Trapido, Introduction to Kadalie, **My life and the ICU**, p.20.

125. See Kadalie, op. cit., pp.63, 85, 100 passim for an account of his international links; also Johns, 'Trade union, political

pressure group, or mass movement?', p.721 *passim*.

126. **SAW**, 19 November 1926.

127. Claudin, **The Communist movement**, p.153.

128. See Degras, *op. cit.*, p.301. While on occasion criticising the General Council, the ECCI continued to call for support for the Anglo-Russian Committee. See James, *op. cit.*, p.222 and F. Borkenau, **The Communist International**, London, Faber and Faber, 1938, p.283.

129. **SAW**, 13 August 1926.

130. James, *op. cit.*, p.223; M. Woodhouse and B. Pearce, **Essays on the history of Communism in Britain**, pp.137-148.

131. In its reaction to the Hertzog Bills, the ICU had called for the extension of the Cape franchise, "the qualifications, particularly educational, of voters to be raised considerably". 'Resolutions of demonstrations against the Prime Minister's Native Bills', Karis and Carter, **From protest to challenge**, Vol.1, p.326. The CP appeared to follow at least a part of this, calling not for a universal franchise, but the extension of the Cape franchise to other Provinces. See **SAW**, 13 January 1926; also Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p308, who make the point partly to indicate that the adoption of the Native Republic programme was an advance. It is interesting to note that at the same time, Bunting, in his own idealised way, was already grappling with the idea of black majority rule, supporting it provided that it was, at the same time, working class rule. See **SAW**, 19 July 1926.

132. The point was actually made by Stalin, whose policies the Chinese CP had pursued, after he had embarked on a left-turn. See James, **World Revolution**, p.265.

133. SAW, 6 August 1926. Greene was probably unique as a white member of the ICU.
134. SAW, 20 August 1926.
135. SAW, 5 November 1926.
136. SAW, 24 December 1926
137. See Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.164.
138. SAW, 21 January 1927.
139. SAW, 13 December 1926.
140. Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.167.
141. See H. Bradford, '"A taste of freedom": capitalist development and response to the ICU in the Transvaal countryside', B. Bozzoli, **Town and countryside in the Transvaal: capitalist penetration and popular response**, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983, p.139: She points out that "the belief that the ICU was to restore 'freedom' without the active participation of the masses was widespread". She quotes the ICU District Secretary from Bethal as having to warn: "some of you have been misled by speakers who said that the ICU has great power, even over the white man, and then go forth and spread this false doctrine from worker to worker on the farms....."
142. That confidence is reflected in the popular meaning which was given to the initials ICU. See *ibid.*, p135. "Although the initials stood for a fancy title, to us Bantu it meant basically: when you ill-treat the African people. I See You; if you kick them off the pavement and say they must go together with the cars and the ox-carts, I See You; I See You when you do not protect the bantu.... I See You when you kick my brother, I See You."

143. Bradford quotes an old labour-tenant as saying: "Man we thought we were getting our country back through Kadalie." "A taste of freedom", p.159. The tone of Kadalie's autobiography makes clear the arrogant self-opinionated way in which he saw his role. See for example Kadalie, op. cit., p.71. Describing a meeting which he addressed in Johannesburg, in Bloemfontein in 1925, he wrote: "For two hours I held the huge audience spellbound.... I told the people to make 'such a hell of a noise that the white man can not sleep', meaning of course the white capitalist. I also said that 'Parliament must tremble'.... I realised after I had spoken that some history had been made...."

144. See *Cape Times*, 14 June 1927. Mote declared that the ICU would decide to stop the pass system on a signal.

145. See CP Manifesto: 'The Native workers and oppressed peoples of Africa', in *SAW*, 24 December 1926. Kadalie was convicted for defying a second Natal ban in 1926. He appealed successfully. He gave as one of the reasons for the expulsions of the Communists the fact that they proposed a strike, rather than an appeal, in protest against his conviction. See Kadalie, op. cit., p.91 passim; *Cape Times*, 22 December 1926.

146. The point was graphically illustrated in the measures taken by the leadership against branches which opposed the expulsions. See *SAW*, 25 February 1927, on the expulsion of a Vereeniging branch.

147. P. Bonner, 'The decline and fall of the ICU - a case of self-destruction?' in E. Webster, (Ed.), *Essays in Southern African Labour History*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1979, p.118.

148. Kadalie, op. cit., p.96.

149. H. Bradford, 'Mass movements and the petty bourgeoisie: the social origins of ICU leadership, 1924-1929', *The Journal of African History*, Vol.25, No.3, p.2.

150. The appearance was to lead to a persistent tendency, amongst a minority within the left, to see the "rural masses" or the peasantry as the leading force of the revolution. The view was to be expressed within one form of the Black Republic Programme.

151. One of the consistent grievances of the period was the lengthening time which labour tenants (and their families) had to provide to the land-owner. See Bradford, '"A Taste of freedom"', p.129.

152. By 1926, the ICU was suffering a decline of membership in its initial urban base of Cape Town. See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.161.

153. In July 1926, Tielman Roos, Minister of Justice, threatened to introduce a Sedition Bill directed against "agitation among the Natives". Ibid., p.159.

154. The 1925 Constitution of the ICU distinguished between different industrial groups. Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass action?', p.716, suggests that an unsuccessful attempt was made to re-organise along industrial lines in 1924-25.

155. The other side of the same coin was a tendency to see treachery, where petty bourgeois opportunists followed petty bourgeois interests.

156. See Legassick, 'Class and nationalism in South African protest: The South African Communist Party and the 'Native

Republic,' 1926-1934". **Eastern African Studies Program**, Syracuse University, New York, 1973, p.7.; According to Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.42, at one time the ICU in Natal was reported as having 58 paid staff members.

157. See *ibid.*, p.45, for a brief description of the way Champion launched entrepreneurial schemes on ICU funds; also Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?' p.725.

158. **Cape Times**, 22 December 1926.

159. See Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', pp.732,734 and 737.

160. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.355.

161. **SAW**, 24 December 1926.

162. **SAW**, 14 January 1927.

163. **SAW**, 25 February 1927.

164. See 'Open letter from the expelled ICU members to the rank and file', **SAW**, 24 December 1926.

165. **SAW** 1 April 1927.

166. **SAW**, 30 March 1928.

167. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.377.

168. Lewis, op. cit., p.63.

169. The membership rose from 200 Africans in 1927, to 1,600 in 1928. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.406. By 1929, the total membership was 3,000 of whom the great majority were black. 'Resolution on the South African Question', adopted by the ECCI, 1929.

170. 'Memorandum on the question of affiliation of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa to the Trade Union Congress', appendix to Andrews, **Class struggles in South Africa**.

171. SAW, 27 August 1926.

172. Quoted in Simons and Simons, op. cit. p.369, from Forward 21 January 1944.

173. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, Introduction to Part 3, p.153; 'Report on proceedings and resolutions of the Annual Conference of the African National Congress, January 4-5, 1926 [Extracts], Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, p.302.

174. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, Introduction to Part 3, p.153.

175. '"To all leaders of the African people". Statement by J.T. Gumede, President, ANC, September 7, 1927', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, p.304.

176. SAW, 2 March 1928.

177. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.353.

178. Ibid., p.354.

179. SAW, 15 April 1927.

180. SAW, 2 March 1928.

181. See James, op. cit., p.262.

182. See Stalin's 'Theses', in SAW, 20 May 1927; Bukharin in SAW, 17 June 1927; Bukharin in SAW 5 August 1927.

183. See p.147 below.

184. For la Guma's expression of this view see p.139 below. See SAW, 5 August 1927; also ECCI resolutions on China 14 July 1927, 15 December 1927 in Degras, op. cit., pp. 390, 414. This policy was changing while la Guma was in the Soviet Union for the second time.

185. See S. Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru: A biography, London,

Jonathan Cape, 1975, pp.100-109.

186. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.390.

187. See 'Programme of the Communist International', adopted at the 6th Congress, in J. Degras, (Ed.), **The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents**, London, Oxford University Press, 1960.

188. Until 1928, neither the Lovestone nor the Ford faction had given any particular attention to the specific conditions facing US blacks. The issue did not appear amongst the wide range of those which figured in the faction fighting. At the 1927 Brussels conference, individual black delegates had raised the issue, and at this conference, it had become clear that Bukharin supported the Lovestone faction - the leadership until the 6th Congress. Pepper, the Comintern officer with responsibility for the USA had been a key figure in the Workers and Farmers cross-class initiative in 1924.

189. See 'Reports on the Negro Question', *Imprecor*, Vol.3, No.2, pp.14-17.

190. See Claudin, **The Communist movement**, p.279 passim; also SAW, 17 June 1927.

191. See Claudin op. cit., p.283; Carr, E.H. 1917: **Before and after**, London, Macmillan, 1969, p.96.; L. Trotsky, **Leon Trotsky on China**, New York, Monad Press, pp.50-89, 241-342.; 'Circular letter of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party', in R. Daniels, **A documentary history of communism**, Vol. 2, London, I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, p. 75.; 'ECCI Resolutions on China', 14 July 1927, 15 December 1927, and 25 February 1928, in J. Degras (Ed), **The Communist International, 1919-1943**.

- Documents., London, Oxford University Press, pp. 390, 414, 436.
192. See Carr, op. cit., pp.97 and 101; Claudin, op. cit., p.89.
193. Ibid.; Carr, op. cit., p.108.
194. This had been reflected in the position Andrews took in relation to the ICU application for affiliation to the TUC.
195. Simons and Simons, **Class and colour in South Africa**, p.389.
196. Ibid., p.398. Despite this attitude, la Guma was to become General Secretary of AFTU.
197. Ibid., p.395.
198. Ibid.
199. See Roux, **Bunting**, pp.88-9.
200. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.404 passim.
201. Ibid., p.394.
202. Extract dealing with South Africa from the main 'Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-colonies', Degras, op. cit., pp.546-547.
203. See Degras, op. cit., pp.455-457.
204. See *ibid.*, pp.552-553.
205. 'Resolution on "The South African question" adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International following the Sixth Comintern congress', SACP, **South African Communists speak**, pp.91-97.
206. 'Programme of the Communist Party of South Africa adopted at the seventh annual conference of the Party on January 1, 1929', SACP, op. cit., pp.100-107.
207. Ibid., pp.101-2.
208. The resolution stated that "the Comintern slogan of a native

republic means restoration of the land to the landless and land-poor population". 'Resolution on "The South African question"', SACP, op. cit., p.94. It argued that the task of the CP was "to influence the embryonic and crystallising national movements among the natives in order to develop these movements into national agrarian revolutionary movements...."

209. Ibid., p.94.

210. 'Programme of the CPSA', loc. cit., p.103.

211. SAW, 30 November 1928.

212. SAW, 21 December 1929.

213. Degras, op. cit., p.547. There were several other formulations in the initial period:

SAW, 31 December 1929: "For a Native Republic with equal rights for minority races. Africa for the Africans."

SAW, 30 November 1928: "A South African Native Republic as a stage towards a workers and peasants government with full protection and equal rights for all national minorities."

SAW, 30 April 1929: "Long live a South African Native Republic, with equal rights for all toilers irrespective of colour, race and creed."

214. M. Legassick, 'Class and nationalism in South African protest: The SACP and the "native republic"', Syracuse University, 1973, p.49.

215. 'Programme of the CPSA', CPSA, op. cit., p.101.

216. Ibid., p.102.

217. SAW, 31 January 1929.

218. Bunting's position was laid out in a pamphlet. See Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.395 passim, for a summary. His arguments

at the 6th Congress are published in *Imprecor*, Vol. 8, No.44, 3 August 1928, pp.1451-1453.

219. *Ibid.*

220. See Claudin, *op. cit.*, p.156 *passim*; p.607 *passim*. See below, p.183.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. *The Social and Industrial Review*, 5 June 1929, Quoted in Lewis, *Industrialisation and trade union organisation*, p.47.
2. D.H. Houghton and J. Dagut, *Source material on the South African economy: 1860-1970. Volume 3: 1920-1970*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1973, p.120.
3. *Ibid.*, p.122.
4. See O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.35; Lewis, *op. cit.*, p.69.
5. See R. Davies, D. Kaplan, M. Morris, and D. O'Meara, 'Class struggle and a periodisation of the state in South Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 7, 1976.
6. *Ibid.*, p14; D.E. Kaplan, 'An analysis of the South African state in the "fusion period"', collected seminar papers no. 21, *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Vol. 7, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, p.151.
7. In the 1929 election, the NP won an absolute majority of seats for the first time (NP 78; SAP 61; LP 8) The LP share of the vote was reduced from 12,5 to 8,4 per cent; and its number of seats fell from 18. The NP share of the vote was up from 36 to 41.2 per cent of the vote and seats were up from 63 to 78. Stadler, *The party system in South Africa*, Table 1.1 (a); Table 1.1 (b).
8. See Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa*, p.347 *passim*.
9. Andrews, *Class struggles in South Africa*, p.51.
10. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p.30.
11. *Ibid.*, p.29 *passim*.
12. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.79.

13. An index of this movement is the number of children in the urban areas. Between 1926 and 1936, the number of Afrikaans (home language) children under school age in the urban areas rose by 34.31%; the equivalent figure in the rural areas was a drop of 18.04%. The comparable figures for English (home language) children were a fall of 10.25% in the urban areas, and a fall of 36.45% in the rural areas. The urban totals for the numbers of children over the age of seven show an increase of 33.9% for Afrikaners, and 11.02% for English. The absolute numbers of pre-school Afrikaans children in the urban areas rose from 35,325 to 47,445; the numbers of English children fell from 51,621 to 46,328. *Official Census of the Union of South Africa 1936*, Vol. IV. p.4.

14. Lewis, op. cit., p.69.

15. *Forward*, 29 October 1926.

16. Ibid.

17. Carnegie Commission, *The poor white problem in South Africa*, Stellenbosch, 1932, Part 1, para. 9. *Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 14, 1931-1932*, pp.272-274, provides a summary of the major findings and recommendations.

18. The Public Work Department set a level of 8s a day. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.339. *International*, 23 May 1924, reports that 800 members of the Unemployed and Relief Workers' Union of Cape Town clashed with blacks employed on the main drainage system who earn more than the white relief workers on the same works.

19. In 1928, there were 72,114 applications to Employment

Exchanges for jobs; 19,092 jobs were provided. The number of applications dropped in 1929, and began to rise from 1930. Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 13, 1930-1931, pp.158-159.

20. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.351.

21. Davenport, *South Africa: a modern history*, p.213. Madeley's cabinet position was given to Sampson.

22. Davies et al, op. cit., p.13.

23. Ibid.

24. Innes and Plaut, 'Class struggle and economic development'.

25. Ibid, p.9.

26. Ibid., p.8.

27. Ibid; the point is also made by the fractionalists - see Davies et al, op. cit., p.11.

28. Innes and Plaut, op cit., p.8; See also Davies et al, op. cit., p.11.

29. See Lewis, op. cit., p.9.

30. Lewis, op. cit., p.69.

31. See Davies et al, op. cit., p.11, who quote the report of a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1931 as stating that unemployed whites were likely to sink into "a corrupting intercourse with non-Europeans."

32. See below, p.224.

33. See Lewis, op. cit., p.64 passim. Working class organisation with any form of racial barrier cannot be fully independent.

34. See SAW, 25 May 1928; 22 June 1928; 22 August 1928; 33 November 1929.

35. Umsebenzi, 10 October 1930.

36. See letter from Sachs to Huyser, 31 October 1930.
37. See p.199.
38. The clearest example of this was in the rejection of the ICU request for affiliation.
39. See p.164.
40. Round Table of June 1931 reported "many outward murmurings in the railway camps and on the farms".
41. Lewis, op. cit., p.64.
42. This was an echo of the dispute in the CYL in 1923. As was the case then, Sachs favoured a primary orientation to white workers.
43. See P.B. Rich, **White power and the liberal conscience**, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984. p.28 passim, on the formation of the SAIRR.
44. See P. Bonner, 'The 1920 black mineworkers' strike: a preliminary account' in B. Bozzoli (Ed.), **Labour, township and protest**, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1979, p286.

45. Manufacturing:

	S a l a r i e s		E m p l o y m e n t	
	1,000 pounds European	Other	1,000 European	Other
1928/29	19,606	6,914	89,141	128,345
1932/33	16,823	5,052	87,173	105,310

Figures derived from **Official Yearbooks of the Union of South Africa**

46. An effect of the imposition of the Native Taxation Act of 1926 was to increase the burden of taxation in Natal and the Cape, where the poll tax increased from 14s and 10s to one pound. In

1928, compulsory dipping was introduced, effectively representing a new form of tax on livestock. See *Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa* No. 10, 1927-1928, p.962. The Urban Areas Amendment Act legalised the situation in relation to women, bringing them fully under Urban Areas legislation. This meant that they became liable to a lodgers' tax. The liability previously had been unclear because of the lack of clarity in the legal status of women in the towns.

See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.260; Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.433; Walker, *op. cit.*, p.631. See Umsebenzi, 10 October 1930, on "the crisis" developing in Vereeniging because black women are being forced to carry passes under the Urban Areas Amendment.

47. See Umsebenzi, 27 May 1933, on police raids after the curfew in Sophiatown; Umsebenzi, 20 February 1931, on the re-introduction of a curfew on the Rand; Umsebenzi, 10 October 1930, on the introduction of a curfew in Pietermaritzburg; also Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.445.

48. For an outline of the provisions of the Act, see Nzula et al, *Forced labour in colonial Africa*, p.74; Walker, *op. cit.*, p.631; Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.452; See also Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p.156. The Act provided for specific areas to be "proclaimed"; but there were no such proclamations.

49. See p.178.

50. Nzula et al, *op. cit.*, pp.75 and 78.

51. See Umsebenzi, 28 February 1929, for a description of a protest by women in Vereeniging against the introduction of a 2s lodgers' tax; J. Wells, "'The day the town stood still": Women in

resistance in Potchefstroom 1912-1930', Bozzoli, **Town and countryside in the Transvaal**, for an excellent account of the struggle on the lodgers' tax and other issues in Potchefstroom; also Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.260, on the opposition to the lodgers' tax in Germiston.

52. In 1929/30, the total collected was 993,603, (figures in pounds)

in 1930/31	992,488
in 1931/32	912,162
in 1932/33	848,120

The total rose sharply in 1934/35, and then began to fall again.

53. The Natal totals are:

1925/26	235,953
1929/30	252,127
1930/31	251,413
1931/32	211,969
1932/33	184,872 (pounds)

(Figures derived from **Official Yearbooks of the Union of South Africa.**)

54. See **Star**, 14 November 1929; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.419; M. Benson, **South Africa: the struggle for a birthright**, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, p.53.

55. Roux, **Time longer than Rope**, p.190; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.416.

56. See **Umsebenzi**, 18 July 1930, which reports on the breaking up of a CP meeting at Potchefstroom; also Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.230; See below for discussion of the IANC.

It seems that it was primarily municipal and location police who were used against black workers in the townships, coming directly under the control of the Superintendents. It was only later that SAP were to be brought into the black townships permanently. On occasions SAP were called in as reinforcements of locations police - see *Umsebenzi*, 12 June 1937, concerning a riot in Benoni.

See also *Umsebenzi*, 28 February 1929 and 18 July 1930; also Wells, *op. cit.*, and Roux p.260.

57. Durban was the centre of the CP pass burning campaign. See below.

58. See *Umsebenzi*, 30 April 1929. Hundreds from Ndabeni attended a procession and mass meeting, and it was agreed that an increase in rents, effective from the beginning of April 1929 should not be paid. In *Umsebenzi*, 10 October 1930, "victory in the rent strike" is reported.

59. *Ibid.*

60. See *Umsebenzi*, 28 February 1929.

61. This point is made, in a different way, by some analysts using a "social history" perspective. See Koch, '"Without visible means of subsistence": slumyard culture in Johannesburg 1918-1940', Bozzoli, *op. cit.*, p.151.

62. See Slater, 'A fresh look at the ICU'; Kadalie, *op. cit.* pp.89-98, on his activities in Natal.

63. See Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', pp.131 *passim*; Kadalie *op. cit.* pp.167-176 on his activities in the Transvaal.

64. See Johns, 'Trade union, political pressure group, or mass movement?', p.737 *passim*; Kadalie *op. cit.* p.181.

65. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.217.
66. Bunting was in fact criticised for his support for the new programme by an opposition around Lopes, in the Cape. See a letter from Lopes in *Umsebenzi*, 26 September 1930. "Marcus Garvey stands for bourgeois Negro republics in Africa and that is what Messrs. Bunting, Roux and Gomas stand for. If they stood for anything else, for example, an independent socialist republic in South Africa they would scrap their present reactionary slogan"
67. See Claudin, *The Communist movement*, p.157.
68. See B. Bunting, *Moses Kotane: South African revolutionary*, London, Inkululeko Publications, 1975, p.56.
69. See below, p.188.
70. Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.411.
71. *SAW*, 31 August 1929.
72. *Ibid.*
73. See *SAW*, 30 September 1929.
74. See Bunting, *op. cit.*, p.52; Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.421; Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.227. Bunting suggests that the Wolton faction of the CPSA was perhaps behind the telegram. Wolton had contested the Cape Flats seat.
75. The letter was dated May. It is probable that it was brought back to South Africa by Wolton at the end of the year.
76. The first clear sign of third period politics in the Party press is in the edition of *Umsebenzi* of 21 November 1930.
77. Quoted in Bunting, *op. cit.*, p.64.
78. 'Resolution on "The South African question" adopted by the

Executive Committee of the Communist International following the Sixth Comintern congress', SACP, South African Communists speak, pp.91-3.

79. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.407.

80. Ibid.

81. Umsebenzi, 5 December 1930.

82. Umsebenzi, 12 December 1930.

83. Ibid.

84. Umsebenzi, 12 June 1931.

85. Umsebenzi, 2 October 1931.

86. Umsebenzi, 25 December 1931.

87. Ibid; see also Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.451.

88. See, for example, the article which attacks Makabeni and announces his expulsion. Umsebenzi, 4 April 1932.

89. Makabeni is an example. See Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.117. Makabeni was later to become openly hostile to the Party.

90. Roux, Time longer than rope, p.244. Ntela was at that time a leading member of the Independent ICU.

91. Umsebenzi, 16 January 1931.

92. Umsebenzi, 27 March 1931.

93. La Guma was expelled in 1929 and re-instated after a self-criticism had been published in Umsebenzi. He was expelled again four months later. See Umsebenzi, 26 June 1931 and 30 October 1931, and Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.449.

94. Umsebenzi, 4 September 1931.

95. See Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.424.

96. Umsebenzi, 22 October 1931.

97. Umsebenzi, 9 January 1931.

98. *Umsebenzi*, 23 January 1931.
99. *Umsebenzi*, 6 February 1931.
100. *Ibid.*
101. *Umsebenzi*, 6 February 1931.
102. Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.459.
103. *Umsebenzi*, 6 January 1933.
104. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.253.
105. *Ibid.*, p.252.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*, p.265.
108. See, for example, *Umsebenzi*, 6 January 1933. After a series of attacks of all forms against the workers' movement, with the mass organisations and the CP almost completely decimated, the *Umsebenzi* headline of an article on the situation in Natal is: "Imperialist terror against Natal workers. Revolutionary mass movement grows". See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.265; also Bunting, *op. cit.*, p.135, describing Kotane's criticism of Bach on the related issue of calls to action without any base. An achievement of Bach's was the formation of the Seamen and Harbour Workers' Union. See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.269; Nzula et al, *op. cit.*, p.133. He put the membership figure in Durban in 1932 at 227; See *Umsebenzi*, 27 May 1935, for the formation of the Cape Town Seamans and Harbour Workers' Union. The membership was put at "about 100".
109. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.267.
110. See *Umsebenzi*, 1 October 1932, 22 October 1932, 16 December 1932; also J. Lewis, 'The Germiston by-election of 1932: the state and the white working class during the Depression' in P.

- Bonner (Ed.), *Working papers in Southern African studies*, Vol.2, Johannesburg, 1981; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.460.
111. *Umsebenzi*, 22 October 1932; Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.261.
112. Ibid. p205.
113. *Umsebenzi*, 4 September 1939.
114. Simons and Simons op. cit. p424.
115. La Guma was expelled in 1929 for supporting a Nationalist against Wolton in the 1929 election. He was re-admitted to the Party in 1931, with a self-criticism being published in *Umsebenzi* 26 June 1931. See also Karis and Carter, *From protest to challenge*, Vol.4, p.53. *Umsebenzi* of 30 October 1931 announces his second expulsion.
116. *Umsebenzi*, 4 March 1932.
117. The reverse was also true. Where there were not successes won by the unions, this was due to "reformism".
118. In the months immediately following the 1930 Party conference, the Party called on black workers to burn their passes; in January, it called for a political strike on 31 May; and in February, it called for a political strike on 6 March. See *Umsebenzi*, 23 January 1931 and 6 February 1931.
119. See M. Nicol, 'Riches from rags: Bosses and unions in the Cape clothing industry 1926-1937', mimeographed paper to Conference on Research in Progress, University of York, 1979.
120. Ibid., p.7.
121. *Umsebenzi*, 16 January 1931. The name was changed at a conference in November 1930, as the implementation of the third

period politics accelerated in South Africa. It is likely that the change of name was to represent a break with the politics of "right opportunism", not just an attempt to revive lagging unions.

122. Roux puts the membership at the end of 1928 as 10,000. **Time longer than rope**, p.209. Nzula put the membership figure at the end of 1932 as "about 4,000". Nzula et al, op. cit., p.131. The later figure he puts precisely at 821, of whom 166 were agricultural workers. Ibid., p.133.

123. See Umsebenzi, 17 June 1933.

124. Nzula et al, op. cit., p.135. See Umsebenzi, 30 January 1931 (one of the first editions under the new leadership). It is implausibly announced that "Strikes [sic] and demonstrations of the unemployed are becoming the order of the day."; see also Umsebenzi, 29 April 1932, which reports the setting up of Johannesburg and Pretoria Unemployed Councils, with people being recruited from the main pass offices.

125. See Umsebenzi, 15 May 1931 and 29 April 1932.

126. The councils were racially segregated. See Nzula et al, op. cit., p.135: "The sole connecting link ... is a general committee made up of unemployed whites and blacks, the worth of which is very weak."

127. The programme demanded two pounds a week for each unemployed man and woman, of whatever race, and 10/- allowance for each child. It also demanded that there be no evictions of unemployed for non-payment of rents. Umsebenzi, 15 May 1931.

128. See Umsebenzi, 7 October 1933; also Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.272-274.

129. Ibid.
130. See Lerumo, op. cit., p.65.
131. Ibid., p.72.
132. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.269.
133. See *ibid.*, p.205.
134. See *Umsebenzi*, 5 December 1930.
135. *Umsebenzi*, 30 June 1929.
136. See *Umsebenzi*, 28 February 1929, for report on establishment of Durban branch; and *Umsebenzi*, 12 January 1931; also Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.245.
137. See R. Cohen, Introduction to Nzula et al, *Forced labour in colonial Africa*, p.3; also Bunting, op. cit., pp.46,58. Nzula went to the Soviet Union in 1931.
138. Ibid. Kotane went to the Soviet Union a month after Nzula.
139. A selection of Nzula's writing has been made available in Nzula et al, op cit.
140. Roux, *Bunting*, p128.
141. See *Cape Times*, 7 January 1930; also Walshe, *The rise of African nationalism*, pp.178-181.
142. *Umteteli*, 6 July 1929.
143. Walshe, op cit., p.178.
144. *Umsebenzi*, 2 May 1930; see also *Umteteli*, 3 May 1930.
145. Ibid.
146. See *Umsebenzi*, 2 May 1930, 25 May 1930 and 27 June 1930. Also Walshe, op. cit., p.180. There was a revote, when the number of votes cast was discovered to be higher than the number of ballots issued.

147. See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.378.
148. Umsebenzi, 9 January 1931, stated that 3,500 passes were burnt in Durban. This is probably an exaggeration, but it is clear that there was a significant degree of support for the Party's call. There was opposition from almost all of the established black leaders.
149. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, Introduction to Part 3, p151.
150. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.437.
151. See Walshe, op cit., p.181. Ndobe and Tonjeni, militants from the Cape, supported Gumedé.
152. These two militants appear, in some accounts, to have been members of the CP. See Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.4, pp.110 and 158; Simons and Simons op. cit. p.424. They seem to have left the Party in 1929, perhaps to avoid Thaele's Garveyist attacks against them for colluding with whites. See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.238. There is no doubt, however, that they had a strong link with the Party. This continued until the third period turn, where the alliance with Ndobe and Tonjeni came under question.
153. See Walshe, op. cit., p.182.
154. See, for example, Umsebenzi, 25 April 1930.
155. Umsebenzi, 25 April 1930.
156. Umsebenzi, 9 May 1930.
157. Umsebenzi, 9 May 1930.
158. Umsebenzi, 16 May 1930.
159. Ibid.
160. Umsebenzi, 20 June 1930.

161. Umsebenzi, 9 May 1930.
162. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.238.
163. Ibid., p. 242; Umsebenzi, 12 September 1930.
164. Umsebenzi, 12 September 1930.
165. See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.241; Umsebenzi, 19 September 1930.
166. Umsebenzi, 27 June 1930.
167. In his letter, criticising the Native Republic slogan, Lopes had attacked the Garveyist rhetoric of Thaele. See Umsebenzi, 26 September 1930.
168. Benson, op. cit., p.57, refers to Communist suspicions that Thaele was a tool of the CID. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.236, writes that: "The Criminal Investigation Department ... found a useful agent in the person of "Professor" James Thaele." The sense of the passage indicates that he means an objective, rather than a conscious, agent.
169. See Umsebenzi, 14 November 1930, and 28 November 1930. The latter carries the manifesto of the IANC.
170. It is probable that CP members who had worked with the militants retained some connection with them which was not based on a third period assessment of them.
171. Umsebenzi, 5 September 1930.
172. This was to become one of the issues in the opposition led by Kotane.
173. Umsebenzi, 30 June 1929, reports the establishment of an Ndabeni branch of 104 members. The strength of the branch has to be doubted, however. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.222, writes

that the Treasurer of the Ndabeni branch supported the SAP in the 1929 election.

174. *Umsebenzi*, 12 September 1930.

175. *Umsebenzi*, 10 October 1930.

176. See Lerumo, op. cit., p.72.

177. Ibid., p.65.

178. See Hertzog's diary, in D.W. Kruger (ed.), *South African Parties and Policies, 1910-1960*, Cape Town, Human and Rousseau, 1960, pp.81-84; Davenport, op. cit., p.215; Walker, op. cit., p.634. See D.W. Kruger, *The making of a nation: A history of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1961*, Johannesburg and London, Macmillan, 1969, p.165, for the "principles" of co-operation.

179. See C.M. van den Heever, *General J.B.M. Hertzog*, Johannesburg, Afrikaanse Pers, 1946, p.249 passim; See Kruger, *SA Parties and Policies*, pp.85-89, for the Programme of the new party.

180. B. Bunting, *The rise and fall of the South African Reich*, Harmondsworth, 1964, p.45.

181. See Kaplan June 1976, p153

182. Lerumo, op. cit., p.71. In making the point, he elongates the date of fusion backwards, from the time when it occurred, to the time when the world capitalist crisis hit South Africa.

183. A. Nzula, 'The fusion Movement in South Africa', Appendix J to Nzula et al, *Forced labour in colonial Africa*, p.213.

184. Ibid., pp.213-7.

185. Walker, op. cit., p.634.

186. Ibid. See also Roux, *Time longer than rope*, pp.260 and 264.

187. See O'Meara, **Volkskapitalisme**, p.37. See Lewis, **Industrialisation and trade union organisation**, p.68.
188. In September 1933, 188,000 Coloured and white men were officially registered as unemployed. That represents more than a fifth of the total number of white and Coloured male labour. **Report of the Department of Labour, 1933**, p.11. Cited in O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p.37.
189. See O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p.240.
190. Walker, *op. cit.*, p.627; Kruger, **The making of a nation**, p.158.
191. *Ibid.*, p.634; van den Heever, *op. cit.*, p.238 *passim*; D. Innes, **Anglo American and the rise of modern South Africa**, London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1984, p.130.
192. See below, p.212.
193. Walker, *op. cit.*, p.634.
194. A leading figure in this process was Tielman Roos. See Kruger, **The making of a nation**, p.160.
195. *Ibid.*, p.173; Davenport, *op. cit.*, p.216
196. Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p.150; Innes, *op. cit.*, p.130.
197. See Hertzog's diary in Kruger, **SA parties and policies**, p.83, where he makes clear his personal wish to have Creswell remain in the Cabinet. Creswell in fact lost his position.
198. 'The United South African National Party: Programme, 1934', in Kruger, **SA parties and policies**, p.88.
199. N.M. Stultz, **Afrikaner politics in South Africa, 1934-1948**, Berkeley and London, 1974, p.30 *passim*; Kruger, **The making of a nation**, p.172; Davenport, *op. cit.*, p.216.
200. See O'Meara, **Volkskapitalisme**, pp.44-5; **SAW**, 23 January

1937.

201. Quoted in Nzula, 'The fusion movement in South Africa', loc. cit., p.217.

202. See below, p.283

203. See O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.241.

204. In 1926, Afrikaans men accounted for 60% of unskilled white labourers; 53% of mineworkers; 42% of railway workers - compared to 18% of carpenters and 10% of fitters. Lewis, op. cit., p.69.

205. Nzula, 'The fusion movement in South Africa', pp.217-218.

206. Umsebenzi, 5 January 1935, advertises "the new Afrikaner monthly organ of the CP". A report on the new journal states: "There is no doubt that the Afrikaans-speaking workers and peasants will play an important part in the revolution in South Africa. That narrow racial chauvinism which characterises the typical Afrikaner [sic] in South Africa ... must be fought and broken down."

207. According to the orthodoxy of the third period, an impact of the deepening economic crisis would be to break down racial divisions within the working class. See Nzula, 'The fusion movement in South Africa', p.218.

208. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.64.

209. See Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.65 passim.

210. See Umteteli, 23 July 1932; also Nzula et al, *Forced labour in colonial Africa*, p.170.

211. See Haines, op. cit.

212. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.661.

213. This added 415,003 white voters to the electoral roll.

- Walker, op. cit., p.630. The total number of black voters dropped, as a percentage, from 9.3 to 4.4.
214. The educational and property qualifications which had applied in the Cape and Natal were removed for white men. Walker, op. cit., p.630.
215. Kaplan, op. cit., p.154; Innes p130.
216. See Nzula, 'The fusion movement in South Africa', loc. cit., p.216.
217. Umteteli, 4 March 1933.
218. Umteteli, 21 October 1933.
219. Umteteli, 23 June 1934.
220. See Bunting, Moses Kotane, pp.61-70. 221. 'Letter calling for Africanisation in the Party from Moses M. Kotane in Cradock to Johannesburg District Party Committee dated February 23, 1934', in SACP, South African Communists speak, p.120. Extracts are printed in Lerumo, op. cit., p.133.
222. See Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.69.
223. Ibid., p.73.
224. Bunting says there is uncertainty as to what happened. Ibid., p.73. Simons and Simons say he was executed. Op. cit., p.477. In 1937, at a time of mass purges and executions in the Soviet Union, SAW carried a report on the findings of the International Control Commission of the Communist International investigation into Bach. It stated that he had been expelled. See SAW 9 July 1937.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Delegate at a union conference, quoted in B Hirson, 'The making of an African trade union movement', mimeo, p.2. I am extremely grateful to Baruch Hirson who has allowed me to use his unpublished work. This has been of enormous help in developing an understanding of the period under discussion in this chapter.
2. **No Sizwe, One Azania, one nation. The national question in South Africa**, London, Zed Press, 1979, p.53.
3. I.B. Tabata's book on the period is titled **The Awakening of a People**, Nottingham, Spokesman, 1974.
4. See below p.261 and p.381.
5. The total number of members in the period under discussion was not more than 23,000, at any point in the period. By November 1941, when the two union blocs fused, the joint membership was put at 37,000. See B. Hirson, 'The reorganisation of African trade unions in Johannesburg, 1936-42', mimeo, p.8.
6. See B. Hirson, 'African Trade Unions in the Transvaal, 1935-47', mimeo, p.7. He argues that Makabeni "took exception to Gordon's activities - partly because of the latter's openly proclaimed Trotskyism...." Peter Abrahams said of Gordon: "Nominally he was a Trotskyist, but his determined refusal to turn his unions into part of the Left faction fight made him unpopular with the majority of his comrades". Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.512, write that he was "reputed" to be a Trotskyist.
7. Hirson, 'The reorganisation of African trade unions', p.1, argues that there was "little or no continuity with the movements of the twenties". He points out, however, that former leaders and

organisers, going back to the ICU, played a role in the unions in the 1930's.

8. Andrews, *Class struggles in South Africa*, p.54.

9. Makabeni had been leader of the union from its formation. See Lewis, *Industrialisation and trade union organisation*, p.59. He was banished to the Transkei in 1932 - and expelled from the CP in that year. See *Umsebenzi*, 4 March 1932.

10. See *SAW*, 8 August 1936. The conference decided to appeal to the TLC for "financial and moral assistance".

11. Hirson, 'African Trade Unions in the Transvaal', p.7.

12. Andrews, *op. cit.*, p.54. He puts the precise figure at 2,672.

13. The figures for union membership did not increase consistently every year within every union. For example, there was a fall in membership of the African Printing Workers' Union which Gordon attributed to the failure to win concessions through the Industrial Council. Hirson, 'The reorganisation of African trade Unions', p.6. When Gordon was interned, subscriptions in the first two months fell by two thirds. *Ibid.*, p.7.

14. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.333.

15. This was open only to unions whose membership was included in the terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act.

16. In 1938/39 there were 143,000 blacks employed in manufacturing compared to 76,000 in 1932/33. Houghton, *The South African economy*, pp.122-123. Between 1936 and 1946, the annual percentage growth of the urban African population was 4.33. Report No. 02-02-01. *Urban and rural population of South Africa: 1904-1960*. Bureau of Statistics, Pretoria.

17. The turn-over rate of the African workforce was 157% in transport; 155% in the building industry; 136% in flats and other buildings; 101% in steel; 94% in commerce; 57% textiles; 51% paper; 50% leather; 40% furniture. The figures are derived from a report by C.S. Richards, based on a study of Johannesburg Employment Records, and are quoted in Hirson, 'The Making of an African trade union movement', mimeo, p.1.

18. Gomas, a leading Communist who had been active in the ICU and was involved in the Cape unions probably overstated the point. After describing the reformism and racism of the (white) trade unions he wrote:

"[W]e find that the native and Coloured workers are not only doubtful of the usefulness of trade unions to them, but a very large number of them is of the opinion that the trade unions are a means to drive them out of industry and employment and worsen their conditions". Umsebenzi, 16 February 1935.

19. See Lewis, Industrialisation and trade union organisation, p.73.

20. See Davies, 'The 1922 strike on the Rand', p.8.

21. M. Stein, 'Max Gordon and African trade unionism on the Witwatersrand, 1935-1940', in E. Webster (Ed), Essays in Southern African Labour History, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1978, p.151.

22. This approach is reflected in the work of Stein, *ibid*.

23. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p.159; See Third Interim Report, U.G. 1940/1941, pp.35,56,57,58, in Houghton and Dagut, Source material on the South African economy, p.156g, para.173; para.261.

24. See below, p.257.

25. Between 1933 and 1939, the gross value of output in

manufacturing increased by 108%. Houghton, op. cit., p.122. Between 1936 and 1939, it rose from 150,337 thousand pounds to 199,617 in 1939. The total value of mining products rose from 54,895 thousand pounds in 1931 to 110,537 in 1939. Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 22, 1941, p.vi. The number of workers employed in manufacturing increased by 77% between 1932/33 and 1938/39. Houghton, op. cit., p.122.

26. An example of this is the still relatively unorganised distribution of responsibility between national and local government. Legislation provided a framework within which the responsibilities could be distributed, but it still had to be implemented. See M. Legassick, 'Legislation, ideology and economy in post-1948 South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, p.8.

27. See Hirson, 'The reorganisation of African trade unions', pp.6-7. The procedure of making an award under the Wages Act could take in the region of 18 months. The major victory of unions came with the determination made for the distributive trade, gazetted in December 1939. See *ibid.*, p.6. See Hirson, 'African Trade Unions in the Transvaal', p.27, for a list of the three favourable determinations.

28. N. Mokgatle, *The autobiography of an unknown South African*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1971, p.228.

29. *SAW*, 12 December 1936.

30. There is a brief report in *SAW*, 5 December 1936. Also see Hirson, 'African trade unions in the Transvaal', p.11.

31. Ibid. p.12.
32. Ibid.
33. See **Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa** No. 18, 1937, p.289; **Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa** No. 22, 1941, p.227. The number of African strikers in 1933 was 330, in 1936 - 1,568, in 1937 - 4849, in 1938 - 3,706, in 1939 - 4,839.
34. **SAW**, 5 June 1937.
35. **SAW**, 16 January 1937.
36. See **SAW**, 16 January and 23 January 1937.
37. **SAW**, 20 June 1936. In this period, there was a new column in the paper, written by Josie Mpama, under the heading 'Location News', in which the range of issue facing workers in the communities was regularly taken up.
38. **SAW**, 29 February 1936.
39. **SAW**, 28 March 1936.
40. **SAW**, 14 November 1936.
41. **SAW**, 30 January 1937.
42. **SAW**, 5 June 1937.
43. **SAW**, 12 June 1937.
44. In the aftermath of the riot more than 500 blacks were arrested. In at least two separate incidents, white mobs, with Greyshirt involvement, attacked blacks. See **Guardian**, 1 October 1937; also 'Vereeniging: Who is to blame?', pamphlet issued by the Johannesburg CP, no date; also **Star**, 20 September 1937, 21 September 1937 and 22 September 1937. There was no edition of **SAW** between 4 September and 6 November.
45. See **SAW**, 6 November 1937.

46. See 'Proceedings and resolutions of the Non-European Conference, January 1931 [Extracts] (Published in Minutes of the Third Non-European Conference', in Karis and Carter, *From protest to challenge*, Vol.1, pp.273-281.
47. See Umsebenzi, 26 October 1935; also 'A National Convention', Statement by the Rev. Z.R. Mahabane in the *Bantu World*, May 18 1935.
48. Umteteli, 28 December 1935.
49. Ibid.
50. Tabata, *The awakening of a people*, p.17.
51. See 'The All African Convention Proceedings and Resolutions of the AAC, December 15-18 1935', Karis and Carter, *From protest to challenge*, Vol.2, pp.31-46. Benson, *The struggle for a birthright*, p.66, reveals that an Afrikaans newspaper summarised the proceedings: 'NATURELLE BLY STIL' on its placards.
52. 'The AAC Convention Proceedings and Resolutions', p.39.
53. Ibid., p.33.
54. See *Cape Argus*, 17 February 1936; also Benson, *op. cit.*, p.69.
55. See Walshe, *The rise of African nationalism*, pp.122 and 130; Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.494; Benson, *op. cit.*, pp.66-70. Before the Cape Town meeting, Jabavu, writing in response to an invitation to attend a Joint Council Conference, had said: "While some of us belong to both bodies and agree that the ... Conference will be useful in enlightening public opinion, nevertheless our duty to the Bloemfontein Convention compels us to discharge first our mission of transmitting the findings of

the Convention before anything else." He also pointed out that he and other members of the delegation were not in a position to change the policies agreed at Bloemfontein. Umsebenzi, 18 January 1936. He strongly denied, afterwards, that any agreement had been reached. But the pressure to go along with some form of compromise was enormous, especially in light of the nature of the Bloemfontein decisions. They made it clear what to tell the government and what to ask the government. They gave no guidance, however, about what to do when the government did not listen - nor did they consider any form of action aimed at pressing the government to change its policy. From such a weak starting point, any concession must have seemed like progress, at least to some elements within the AAC.

56. See Xuma papers, Schreiner, Hoernle, Ramsbottom to Xuma, 11 February 1936; Hoernle to Xuma 13 February 1936; also Davenport, op. cit., p.221.

57. 'The AAC Convention Proceedings and Resolutions', loc. cit., p.46.

58. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part 1, p.9.

The framework involved indirect elections to a Natives Representative Council; and the elections of three Native MP's; two Cape Provincial Councillors, and two senators, by enfranchised blacks. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol. 2, Introduction to Part 1, p.10.

59.

60. "Presidential address" by Professor D.D.T. Jabavu, AAC, June 29, 1936, Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.48.

61. 'Proceedings and Resolutions of the AAC, June 29-July 2, 1936', Karis and Carter, op. cit., p.54. It was adopted unanimously.
62. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part 1, p.10.
63. Selope Thema, T.M. Mapikela, John Dube, A.M. Jabavu, R.H. Godlo, C.K. Sakwe. The first three were the provincial leaders of the ANC in Transvaal, OFS and Natal respectively.
64. See SAW, 13 February 1937; The AAC Executive could not reach a decision either. Shortly thereafter, the Transvaal ANC congress was held and it called for a joint Transvaal/OFS ANC meeting in March to discuss, inter-alia, "the re-organisation of the Congress throughout the country." SAW 20 February 1937.
65. 'Constitution of the AAC, December 1937', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.65.
66. '"Policy of the AAC". Statement issued by the Executive Committee of the AAC, December 1937', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.63.
67. Ibid., p.64.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. 'Constitution of the AAC', loc. cit, p.65.
71. See Walshe, op. cit., p.223.
72. The elected members of the NRC were elected by an indirect franchise, with location advisory boards forming the basis of the electoral college.
73. See Umsebenzi, 16 January 1931; Walshe, op. cit., p.254,

Nzula et al, op. cit., pp.167-171.

74. Walshe, op. cit., p.254.

75. Ibid.

76. This had initially been put forward by Seme in 1932. See '"The African National Congress - is it dead?" Pamphlet by Pixley ka Isaka Seme, 1932 [Extract]', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, pp.313-7. See Umsebenzi, 2 February 1935, letter from 'Constant Reader'.

77. Walshe, op. cit., pp.255-6.

78. Ibid., p.256.

79. See SAW, 1 August 1937. The conference was called by Selope Thema and R.G. Baloyi, both NRC members (who had not been nominated by the Transvaal ANC - SAW, 30 February 1937). The Co-ordinating Committee which was set up included the Communists Mofutsanyana and Josie Mpama as members. Marks was also a member - in this period he was expelled by the CP.

80. The National Liberation League and the AAC, both formed in 1935, posed a challenge to the ANC, even if that challenge was not intentional.

81. See for example Umteteli, 18 April 1936 in which Seme attacks militants within the AAC.

82. Benson, op. cit., p.72; Walshe, op.cit., p.255.

83. This was expressed, for example, in the issues raised at the Conference of the Transvaal African Vigilance Federation. As well as the issue of the composition of Advisory Boards, which was primarily of immediate concern to elements within the black petty bourgeoisie, it also included minimum wage demands - an issue of immediate relevance to the mass of workers. See SAW 16 January

1937.

84. This was reflected in the argument that the Cape Native Franchise had been used responsibly - and was therefore proof of the ability of qualified blacks to participate in the political structures of "European civilisation". See 'Testimony of Professor D.D.T. Jabavu and others before the Select Committee on Subject of Native Bills, May 30, 1927', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, p.205.

85. See Walshe, op. cit., p.257; Natal remained relatively immunised from the new re-organisational drives, under the tight grip of Dube.

86. See Tabata, op. cit., p.24 passim.

87. See above, p.142.

88. The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts established a level of approximately 14% of South Africa's land area. J. Nattrass, 'The dynamics of black rural poverty in South Africa', H. Giliomee and L. Schlemmer (eds), *Up against the fences: Poverty, passes and privilege in South Africa*, Cape Town and Johannesburg, David Philip, 1985, p.17.

89. Mokgatlhe, *Autobiography*, p.212.

90. See H. Giliomee, 'The changing political functions of the homelands', Giliomee and Schlemmer, op. cit., p.43. Giliomee, *ibid.*, points out that "by the end of the 1920's ... the reserves had already become seriously overcrowded, overstocked and overgrazed." See Nzula et al, op. cit., pp.69-77.

91. *Report of the Native Economic Commission*, UG22/1932, para.56.

92. *Ibid.*

93. Legassick et al, in unpublished notes, have emphasised this point in answering the question "what is a peasant?". It is one, but not the only necessary factor in providing the answer.

94. The Native Trust and Land Act made provision for the release of an additional seven million morgen to blacks. Gilliomee, op. cit., p.45. He follows Davenport in pointing out the system of trust tenure, as opposed to individual purchase, "was precarious, and prevented the emergence of a new class of African 'kulaks'...."

95. That is one of the reasons that there was some support for the Hertzog Bills, and suggestions that the principle embodied in the Bills be carried through into a full segregation between black and white South Africa. See the 'Testimony of Sakwe and others to the Select Committee on Subject of Native Bills, May 6, 1927 [Extracts]', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, p.201; also Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.288; Haines, 'The opposition to General Hertzog's Segregation Bills', loc. cit., p.169. See also '"Presidential Address", by Professor D.D.T. Jabavu, AAC, June 29, 1936', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.53. Jabavu indicates a willingness to consider a separate black state, now that the laws are enacted.

96. See letter in *Umsebenzi*, 29 June 1935, from Tantsi of the Transvaal ANC. He listed security of individual land tenure in urban and rural areas as one of the six "more important claims" of the black man. See Walshe, op. cit., p.141, on R.H. Godlo.

97. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.116, has pointed out that the exemption certificate itself was effectively a form of pass. Nonetheless, it would have drawn a line, however fragile, between

those who had the exemption, and those who did not. That line was made more substantial by the social and economic factors which were likely to separate the two sets of people.

98. Conducting pass law raids against congregations of workers promoted the possibility of a collective response. See *SAW*, 12 June 1937, on Benoni.

99. *Umsebenzi*, 3 August 1935.

100. See 'The All African Convention Proceedings and Resolutions of the AAC, December 15-18, 1935', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.32.

101. See, for example '"Presidential Address" by S.M. Makgatho, South African native Congress, May 6, 1919', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.1, p. 107.

102. See *Hoernle Lectures*, May 1939, SAIRR, Johannesburg, p153. The way in which liberals promoted this approach to the law in general is clearly demonstrated, in an unpublished paper by Martin Legassick.

103. See, for example, 'Location News' by Josie Mpama, in *SAW*, 16 January 1937; also *Umsebenzi*, 16 February 1935, on the United Committee against passes, pick-up and general persecution, located in Springs, Benoni, and the Western Native Township.

104. See Bunting, *Time longer than rope*, p.61.

105. See *Umsebenzi*, 9 February 1935, letter from J.G.C. [Drake Coka]; *Umsebenzi*, 20 April 1935, article by Roux; *Umsebenzi*, 27 April 1935, article by A.Z. [Mofutsanyana].

106. See below, p.286.

107. *Umsebenzi*, 16 February 1935.

108. Umsebenzi, 27 April 1935.
109. Umsebenzi, 20 April 1935.
110. Umsebenzi, 9 February 1935.
111. See Claudin, *The Communist movement*, p.182 passim.
112. Ibid., p.185.
113. Umsebenzi, 21 September 1935.
114. Claudin, op. cit. The turn in this direction had already been expressed in 1934, when the Soviet Union entered the League of Nations.
115. Umsebenzi, 4 January 1936.
116. Ibid., and Umsebenzi, 11 January 1936. A resolution of "greeting and sympathy" was sent to the AAC conference by the League conference. Reporting that resolution, Umsebenzi, 4 January 1936, wrote that it "expresses a link between the United Front Conference and the Convention of the African people assembled to oppose repressive legislation...."
117. See Umsebenzi, 11 January 1936.
118. See Umteteli, 18 April 1936; also Umsebenzi, 2 May 1936.
119. Umsebenzi, 2 May 1936.
120. SAW, 15 August 1936; the name was changed from Umsebenzi as from the edition of 13 June 1936.
121. See 'AAC Proceedings and Resolutions', Karis and Carter, *From protest to challenge*, Vol.2, p.38, on "grievances from oppressive laws". The resolution was proposed by F.H.M. Zwide of Port Elizabeth, and seconded by Marks (Johannesburg).
122. See Umsebenzi, 18 January 1936: "For the first time in the history of the sub-continent has a national call been issued by

an all- Union national convention, calling on the people to unite and counteract the ferocity of the Blood Thirsty S.A Government."

123. Ibid., Umsebenzi, 11 April 1936.

124. Umsebenzi, 11 April 1936, 25 April 1936, 2 May 1936, 9 May 1936, 16 May 1936, 23 May 1936, 6 June 1936; SAW 20 June 1936, 27 June 1936.

125. Umsebenzi, 18 April 1936.

126. See A.J. Southall, 'Marxist theory in South Africa until 1940', MA dissertation, University of York, 1978. p.70.

127. See SAW, 4 September 1937, which argues that "an agreement to revive the ANC ... does not mean the abolition of the AAC, but on the contrary, strengthening it"; also SAW, 15 January 1938:

"The conference of the AAC ... from December 13 to 15 1937 marked a turning point in the political life of Africans.... [T]he decisions arrived at and the resolutions passed were of such a nature that if they are put into practice there can be no doubt that the AAC will become the real representative of the exploited and oppressed African people."

128. See above, p.264.

129. See SAW, 27 June 1936. The article stated that the Party would not "give up our independent action as a political party, or refrain from criticism of anti-working class action of those who are treacherously opposing and weakening the class struggle." It also declared that the Party would "refrain from public criticism while working and speaking jointly with any other officials or members of [the united front movement]" As Simons and Simons, *Class and colour*, p.478, explain, this position meant "that Communists would ... refrain from public criticism of their

allies". In the period under discussion, this meant effectively no public criticism of the LP, TLC, or AAC. Later, it extended to the ANC.

130. The FSU had been formed during the third period, and was effectively revived, as a broad front organisation in accordance with the 7th Congress policies. Delegations from the FSU were sent to the Soviet Union, and went on speaking tours when they returned to SA. See Umsebenzi, 2 March 1935, on the visit of J. Wolmarans, H. Cornelius, and R. Zurcher as FSU delegates to Soviet May Day celebrations. The League against Fascism and War was formed in March, 1934. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.471.

131. See Umsebenzi, 2 May 1936.

132. See SAW, 10 October 1936.

133. Kalk, Cornelius, Wolfson, Basner, Weinbren, Sachs. SAW, 10 October 1936

134. See SAW, 16 October 1936, and Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.480.

135. SAW, 10 April 1937.

136. Umsebenzi, 15 January 1936.

137. See SAW, 2 January 1937; 20 March 1937. The TLC and the Cape Federation agreed to hold an annual joint conference and appoint a joint national committee. See also Guardian, 22 April 1938, which announces the formation of a Joint Committee. Some Communists expressed strong reservations about the value of the Joint Committee. A letter to the Guardian, 8 July 1938, from a CP member points out that "a concerted and successful effort was made to keep militant trade unionists off the National Executive

[of the TLC] and the National Joint Committee." The Joint Committee split - *Guardian*, 14 April 1939, and then re-emerged - *Guardian*, 28 June 1940.

138. See *SAW*, 10 April 1937; also *Guardian*, 2 April 1937.

139. This was to come into effect from the beginning of June 1936. *Umsebenzi*, 10 April 1936.

140. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.91, describes it as a promise, from the unions, of "industrial docility."

141. The *Guardian* wrote: " Not since the stirring days of the 1922 strike has trade union solidarity been more strongly in evidence than at this juncture."

142. The Party strongly opposed a split within the LP which led to the formation of a Socialist Party. See *SAW*, 2 January 1937.

143. *SAW*, 16 October 1936. One LP branch was officially represented at the founding conference.

144. *SAW*, 29 August 1936.

145. *SAW*, 12 June 1937. The minimum proposed was 10/- per day for whites, and 5/- per day for blacks. See Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, pp.481-482.

146. The importance of this had been stressed by Party members on different occasions. See, for example, a report of Andrews' speech at the founding conference of the Peoples Front Movement, *SAW*, 16 October 1936.

147. See O'Meara, 'Analysing Afrikaner Nationalism', p.65; in 1939, one in every 11 adult male Afrikaners worked on the Railways.

148. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.90.

149. Luckhardt and Wall, *Organise ... or starve!*, p.58.

150. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.90.

151. Ibid.

152. See SAW, 2 May 1936.

153. At the meeting, Sachs made an outspoken speech, taking up directly the favourite Nationalist attacks - support for the Soviet Union and the fact that he was Jewish:

"We built our union to fight against sweating, starvation wages and exploitation, and to make the lives of our members happier and easier...." Replying to Eric Louw and Co's threat he said,

'I draw my inspiration from Russia - Tsarist Russia. Are you workers going to be misled by Jew-baiting and lies?' he asked.

'NO' came the reply from nearly 3,000 throats." D. Cohen, *Our struggle for the independence of South Africa, for the democratic republic*, Johannesburg, 1939, p.86. Quoting *Daily Express* reporter.

154. See SAW, 15 August 1936 and 19 September 1936.

155. Wolfson's trade union report at the conference, carried in SAW, 26 September 1936, made only very brief mention of the formation of the Co-ordinating Committee. See also Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.79.

156. These included Andrews, Kalk, Cornelius, and Wolfson.

157. See 'Communism and the native question', Johannesburg, n.d.; T. Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, London and New York, Longman, 1983, p.31, dates the document circa 1935. It seems most likely that it was in fact published in either 1936 or 1937. Together with the assertion that "workers' interests are identical" are several crudely racist arguments: "In South Africa

natives are employed not at the rate of three to one Europeans - which is their just due - but at the rate of five to one. They are getting far more than their share in the number of jobs."

"The Party does not try to blink the facts or pander to mistaken beliefs. To many workers, the barbarity, uncouthness and backwardness of the native is a serious deterrent. The individual worker may object to the native's colour or his smell and may start by shuddering at the idea of being his 'comrade' but the CP knows that economic struggle is not a parlour game."

The pamphlet assures that "Labour Equality" won't lead to "marrying natives". "If both races have the self-respect that comes from a proper human status and a proper standard of living, mixing will be far less likely to take place."

In 1935, a Party leaflet advertising an anti-fascist rally concludes:

"Turn up in your thousands to protect your fellow workers against Greyshirts (Nazis). Destroy the pest before it is too late. Put up a fight for liberty and free speech. Refuse to tolerate racialism in South Africa". The same leaflet was also put out in Afrikaans. The whole leaflet is exactly the same, with the exception that the last sentence is omitted. *Umsebenzi*, 2 March 1935.

158. See Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p82. Mofutsanyana was elected to the incoming ANC cabinet at the conference in December 1937.

159. Simons and Simons, p.482.

160. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.80; Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.484.

161. SAW, 26 February 1938.

162. See above, p.245.

163. Guardian, 22 April 1938.

164. Z. Gool chaired the meeting which founded the NEUF. In 1938 she was elected to the Political Bureau of the CP. Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.91. Gool, Kotane, Andrews, Dadoo and Naidoo were all on the National Council of the NEUF, elected in 1939. Ibid., p.94. Before the conference, la Guma of the NLL, who rejoined the CP in this period, attacked suggestions that the NEUF Easter conference "will approach the Coloured Problem from a Socialist or Communist angle.... My organisation, which has taken a large part in convening this conference, is as its name implies, concerned with neither of these two political doctrines, solely with the struggle of non-European people for equality of opportunity... and for the development of growing National aspirations." Guardian, 1 April 1938.

165. Umsebenzi, 20 April 1935.

166. Umsebenzi. 27 April 1935.

167. Umsebenzi, 23 May 1936. Concluding part of a two part article on the 'United Front against national oppression and fascism', by S.B.

168. SAW, 10 October 1936.

169. SAW, 16 October 1936.

170. SAW, 12 February 1938.

171. Guardian, 11 February 1938.

172. At one stage, la Guma had proposed that whites be barred from the NLL. Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.94. The Peoples Front Movement was "all-white". Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.480.

173. See Umsebenzi, 11 January 1936. Gomas wrote:

"Many SACP members are extremely confused as to what the relationship of the CP should be to the mass and non-Party organisations - trade unions, Labour defence (Ikaka), NLL, League against Facism and War, Friends of the Soviet Union, and any other organisation of the masses - and what should be the function of the Communists in the mass organisation mentioned.... It is very necessary that the lack of clarity in the minds of CP members be cleared. One can say without fear of contradiction that due to the lack of clarity, the CP is not making the required headway among the masses."

174. SAW, 9 July 1937.

175. See Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.91.

176. Lerumo, *Fifty fighting years*, pp.72-73.

177. Lance Morley Turner, assistant secretary of the NLL, and General Secretary of the General Workers Union is an example.

178. See *Guardian*, 13 January 1939; 10 February 1939; 3 March 1939 and 31 March 1939, for reports of the struggle against the Cape segregation proposals.

179. Emmerich, in the Tramwaymens' Union was one influential CP member within the Cape Federation who later became an Executive member of the Federation. See Umsebenzi, 25 January 1936; *Guardian*, 3 June 1941.

180. Lerumo, *op. cit.*, p.77.

181. SAW, 25 July 1936; SAW, 21 September 1936

182. SAW, 25 July 1936.

183. See Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.479, *passim*. Bunting,

Moses Kotane, p.79 passim.

184. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.479.

185. See *Umvikeli-Thebe*, May 1936. It reports a major increase in sales and massive interest, until the defeat of the Ethiopian resistance in March 1936.

186. D. Hemson, 'Are migrant workers a sub-proletariat? The dockworkers of Durban', mimeo, p.7.

187. *SAW*, 12 October 1935.

188. Claudin, op. cit., p.180.

189. Quoted in R. Black, *Stalinism in Britain*. New Park Publications, London, 1970. p.118.

190. *SAW*, 30 November 1935.

191. Ibid.

192. See *Umsebenzi*, 5 January 1935.

193. In 1936, the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union was formed, with Ray Alexander as Secretary. It affiliated to the TLC. *SAW* 12 June 1937; see also Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.52, and pp.54-57 for reference to Naidoo.

194. See *SAW* 6 March 1937, on formation of Laundry, Cleaning and Drying Workers' Union in Cape Town; *SAW*, 14 August 1937 on formation of Cape Explosive Workers' Union.

195. See *Umsebenzi* 29 May 1936; also *SAW* 12 September 1936, for formation of SA Railways and Harbours Indian Employees' Union.

196. See, for example, *SAW* 30 January 1937, on the decision of the newly formed African Tin Workers Union to apply for affiliation to the TLC.

197. *SAW*, 6 March 1937.

198. Ibid; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.515, attribute the

amendment to Andrews and Wolfson, In 1934, the TLC policy had been for a minimum of 10 shillings a day for all labourers. Ibid., p.514.

199. SAW, 12 February 1938.

200. See Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.511; B. Hirson, 'The mines, the state and the African trade unions', mimeo, p.6.

201. Simons and Simons, op. cit.

202. Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.51; Hirson, 'The mines, the state and African trade unions'.

203. See Bunting, Moses Kotane, p. 127.

204. See ibid; also Freedom, September 1944, for an exposition of the same argument.

205. See SAW 13 March 1938, for a CP denunciation of Trotskyists involved in the Scaw Works strike.

206. SAW 26 September 1936

207. SAW, 6 March 1937.

208. See Guardian editorial, 8 April 1938.

209. Hirson, 'African trade unions in the Transvaal', p.8.

210. SAW, 6 November 1937.

211. Lerumo, op. cit., p.77.

212. SACP, South African communists speak, 'Editorial note', p.133; Lerumo, op. cit., p.77.

213. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.485.

214. Bunting, Time longer than rope, p.75.

215. See Davenport, op. cit., p.223.

216. See 'The All African Convention Proceedings and Resolutions of the AAC, 1935', loc. cit., p.34. These indicate that Gomas

moved that "delegates to the convention should be instructed to form committees in the towns and villages to organise protest meetings. Success could only be maintained on the basis of the mass organisation of the people...." Dr G.H. Gool declared that "the Cape delegates were not present to discuss the Native Bills, but to reject them in toto and lay the foundation of a national liberation movement to fight against all the repressive laws of South Africa". Ibid., p.45.

217. See *Guardian*, 1 April 1938. Davenport, op. cit., p. 223.

218. See *SAW* 29 August 1936, where Gomas argues the need for an organisation "similar to the American League for Liberation of the Negro", because the AAC did not provide for individual membership. His proposal was opposed by CP member Kalk.

219. See *Guardian*, 31 March 1939, for a report of a NEUF rally which was attended by 20,000; also *Guardian*, 9 December 1938, for a description of an NLL rally.

220. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.94. At the conference of the NEUF in 1942, Gomas and Z. Gool both spoke of the need to "revitalise" the NEUF. *Guardian*, 2 July 1942. The organisation appear to have floundered finally in the course of 1943. In July it held a conference "to fight against the establishment of the Coloured Advisory Council." That struggle came to be dominated by the newly-formed anti-CAD which the CP regarded as being dominated by Trotskyists. The CP attempted, unsuccessfully, to have the name of the anti-CAD changed to "League of Struggle for Coloured Peoples Rights". In this period, the NEUF seems to disappear. See *Guardian*, 11 April 1943, 3 June 1943, 6 January 1944.

221. See Tabata, op. cit., p.17. The idea is pervasive through

his history of the AAC.

222. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.94.

223. **Umsebenzi**, 16 May 1936.

224. Before they rejected the boycott position, the CP wrote of the elected members of the NRC:

"Even these will not be representative of the Bantu masses because they will be nominated and elected by Electoral Colleges which consist of Chiefs, Headmen, and members of local councils and advisory boards. In other words, they will be chosen by the good boy members of the community." **Umsebenzi**, 15 February 1936.

225. 'Introduction to pamphlet, **Native views on the native Bills**. By Professor D.D.T.Jabavu, August 1935', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.15.

226. **SAW**, 8 August 1936.

227. See above, p.258.

228. Quoted in Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part 1, p.5.

229. Editorial in **SAW**, 10 October 1936. 230. This view was to be extended during the Defiance Campaign, in which some liberals accepted the need to break the law to resist it, but accepted also the penalties for so doing.

231. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.94.

232. **Guardian**, 31 March 1939.

233. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.502.

234. **Guardian**, 31 March 1939.

235. See for example Mofutsanyana in **SAW**, 1 August 1937, and 15 January 1938. The general approach was summed up in an article on

the AAC: "Only mass demands and demonstrations, mass organisation and a militant spirit will shake the Government out of its stupid, selfish, reactionary attitude towards the Native." SAW, 9 January 1937.

236. See SAW, 6 November 1937.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. See Walshe, *The rise of African nationalism*, p.254, *passim*. He describes the period 1931-1936 as the "nadir" of Congress, and argue that a revival began in 1936. Nonetheless, as he points out, a decision of 1936 that Calata, the acting Secretary, should visit the the four provincial Congresses took until 1939 to be fully implemented.
2. This was in accordance with the 1937 Constitution, which laid down that the Convention would meet every three years. See 'Constitution of the AAC, December 1937', Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, Vol.2, p.64.
3. R. Koen, 'A history of the African labour movement circa 1924-1946 with special reference to the 1946 African mineworkers' strike', BA(Hons) dissertation, University of Cape Town.
4. Report No. 02-02-01, **Urban and Rural Population of South Africa: 1904-1960**. Bureau of Statistics, Pretoria. The total urban population rose from 1,141,643 in 1936 to 1,689,053 in 1946. 1946 Census, Volume II, Table 23, p.284.
5. The 1936 census indicated that the number of "Native females" in the urban areas had increased between 1921 and 1936 from 298,063 to 639,558. *Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No.22, 1941*, p.993. The 1946 Census indicated a rise in the same population group between 1936 and 1946 from 356,874 to 591,567. *op. cit.*
6. The number of "Natives" under 10 years of age rose from 125,518 in 1936 to 240,272 in 1946. 1946 Census, *op. cit.*, p.283. The under-21 population rose in the same period from 384,658 to

590,331. 1946 Census, op. cit. p. 284.

7. See D. Innes, *Anglo American and the rise of modern South Africa*, pp.166-168; Houghton, *The South African Economy*, pp.122-123.

8. Ibid. Lewis, *Industrialisation and trade union organisation*, pp.88-9, points out that "the global statistics conceal sectoral variations...." He provides figures which reveal that in some industries, there was a decrease in the number of whites employed. An example is building, where the numbers of whites fell by 26%, and there was only a 6% increase in the number of blacks. The rise in the number of whites employed comes largely from a 72% increase in metal, engineering and machinery etc. 9.

Consumer Price Index:

	All	Food	Food/fuel/light
1939	114.6	112.7	110.1
1941	139.8	127.1	124.5
1942	156.9	146.1	141.8
1943	170.6	162.0	156.4
1944	176.6	169.0	163.1
1945	179.1	174.3	167.2
1946	183.4	182.1	173.6

(Figures derived from *Official Yearbooks of the Union of South Africa*.)

10. The figures of crop production during the war year are estimates. These indicate a fall from 1939 levels through the entire period of the war in the production of mealies both in Reserves, and of "Natives on European-owned farms". *Handbook of*

Agricultural Statistics: 1904-1950. Table 36, p.53.

11. See B. Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture' in Bozzoli, **Town and countryside in the Transvaal**, p.43.

12. This was exacerbated when, in 1940, at a time when there was a growing movement to the towns, all building programmes came to an end. See D. Mokonyane, **Lessons of Azikhwelwa: The bus boycott in South Africa**, London, Nakong Ya Rena, 1958, p.31. See **Report of the Native Laws Commission**, U.G. 28/1948, p.24.; Hirson, **Prices, Homes and Transport**', unpublished paper, provides the most detailed account available of the conditions and the struggles around the housing problem.

13. J. Burger, **Black mans's burden**, Gollancz, 1943., p.163. He pointed out that in "the large urban areas there is accommodation at school for less than 50% of the Native children of school-going age." also Koch, op. cit. p.157, note on Bantu education

19. M. Roberts and A.E.G. Trollip, **The South African opposition 1939-1945. An essay in contemporary history**, London, Longmans, Green and Co, 1947, provide a detailed description of the attitude of different groups within the Afrikaner nationalist movement on the question.

14. The vote was 80 to 67. See Walker, **A history of Southern Africa**, p.692; Roberts and Trollip, op. cit., pp.4, 19 passim.

15. Madeley, leader of the LP, became Minister of Labour. See Davenport, **South Africa: a modern history**, p.232; Walker, op. cit., p.694.

16. The LP, in alliance with the UP, won nine seats; Dominion Party seven; UP 89; NP 43. Davenport, op. cit., p.410.

17. The 1946 Census indicates that the number of males in the

urban areas with Afrikaans as a home language rose from 265,230 in 1936 to 409,316 in 1946; the comparable figures for females were 270,307 to 412,245. By 1946, the total population with Afrikaans as a home language in the urban areas, compared to those with English as a home language had risen from 535,537/687,824 to 821,561/833,654. This represented an increase of those with Afrikaans with a home language, as a proportion of the total urban white population, from 43.8% to 49.5%. In the urban areas of the Transvaal, the percentage increase had been greatest, from 44.3% in 1936 to 52.4% in 1946. On the Witwatersrand, the percentage increase was from 29.2% in 1936 to 36.4% in 1946. 1946 Census, Vol. IV, Table 14, p.54.

18. By 1939, 82% of white unskilled workers were Afrikaners, 50% of factory operatives, 69% of mineworkers, and 43% of civil servants. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.221. Lewis, *Industrialisation and trade union organisation*, p.69.

19. See above, p.283, and below, p.413.

20. For a detailed description from within the nationalist movement of the process of re-organisation, see Roberts and Trollip, *op. cit.* See also Stultz, *Afrikaner politics in South Africa*, pp.60-67. For an analysis of the process, see O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.119 *passim*.

21. The material basis of viable class collaboration (short of help from the repressive apparatus of the state) is an expanding capitalist economy which seems capable of meeting workers' needs. In the 1914 war, this was expressed in terms of the policy of supporting your own bourgeoisie, in order to protect your own

economy and therefore your own working class. The support for your own ruling class which came from the Third International after 1941 was based, not on a vision of protecting expanding capitalist economies, but on the perceived defensive needs of the Soviet leadership. In the practical consequences, there is little substantive difference between the two. The difference was clear, however, when the Soviet leadership perceived its needs as being met by breaking any ties with the "democracies", after the Hitler-Stalin Pact and before the 1941 invasion.

22. For the position of the TLC on the war, see Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., pp.169 and 231.

23. The enthusiasm of the leadership of the Cape Federation for the war effort led it to propose a war levy of 1% on all wages. *Guardian*, 28 June 1940.

24. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.102.

25. 'Resolutions of the ANC Annual Conference, December 15-18, 1939', Karis and Carter, *From protest to challenge*, Vol.2, p.155.

26. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.102; Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.304. Both claim that the resolution was amended. Roux suggests that the amendment came from the President-General Xuma, but he is clearly wrong. Xuma was only to become President the following year. The amendment came from the then current President-General, Mahabane.

27. Published in the *Guardian*, 15 August 1940.

28. 'Minutes of the ANC Annual Conference, December 15-17, 1940', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.158. Xuma was elected by 21 to 20. The same conference endorsed the Joint ANC/AAC statement on the war.

29. See letter from Calata, in Tabata, **The awakening of a people**, p.88.
30. Ibid.
31. Tabata regarded the recommendations as a conspiracy, "a piece of machination", aimed at destroying the AAC. Ibid., p.89.
32. See Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.109.
33. Tabata, op. cit., pp. 86-9.
34. Ibid., p.89.
35. See Xuma Papers, Calata to Xuma, 18 August 1938; 13 June 1939.
36. As Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.82, put it: "Calata believed the ANC needed a younger leader who could, above all, appeal to 'the graduates'."
37. There is some evidence which contradicts this position. In July 1940, S. Oliphant wrote to Xuma. Referring to a letter from F. Pendla, Oliphant wrote: "The interesting part of the letter is the fact that Rev Calata - whom I least expected to be so - was very much opposed to your nomination and preferred that Rev Mahabane should be re-elected for another term." The letter proceeds to provide an interesting insight into the electoral machinations within the ANC. "Pendla is asking me to do all I can to get our General Conference to be held in Port Elizabeth. If this can not be done many of them who have to attend the Advisory Board's Conference in Grahamstown will not be able to proceed to Bloemfontein. And much of our support in the elections will have been absent. You understand the position! I am just wondering if

you could not exert (sic) some influence in this direction without arousing suspicion." Calata lost his position as Cape Provincial President to Pendla, immediately after Xuma had been elected. By 1943, Pendla and Oliphant, amongst others, had been suspended by Xuma, and Calata recovered his position in 1943. Walshe, op. cit., pp.390-391. It seems likely that the Oliphant letter was an attempt to drive a wedge between Xuma and Calata, rather than an accurate reflection of Calata's position.

38. See Xuma to Calata, 6 July 1942, Xuma Papers; also Walshe, *The rise of African nationalism*, p.264 passim.

39. This was to be expressed most clearly in the state response to the upsurge of action by black workers at the end of 1942 and thereafter. This effectively brought to an end the reformist climate upon which Xuma depended for advances. The position which he took as the strikes developed - expressions of regret both at the repression and the strikes - was a doomed attempt to pursue reforms, while attempting to balance in the struggle which was deciding the future of those, and other, reforms. Effectively his position amounted to that of a liberal supporter of the state. See Xuma to Smuts, Xuma Papers. 29 December 1942, ABX 421229.

40. See above, p.281.

41. See Walshe, op. cit., p.141, on R.H. Godlo.

42. There were limited freehold rights in some black areas. See T. Lodge, 'The destruction of Sophiatown' in Bozzoli (Ed.), *Town and countryside in the Transvaal*, p.339.

43. A consistent grievance of black workers had been transport charges they are forced to pay to reach work. This was one of the factors behind the Alexandra bus boycott and Sofasonke. See

p.328.

44. See I. Deutscher, *Stalin*, Harmondsworth, Penguin; also Claudin, *The Communist movement*, p.171 passim. A crucial point was reached when Germany and Poland signed a Pact in January 1934. Ibid., p.178.

45. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.97; SACP, *South African Communists speak*, Introduction to Section 3, p.135.

46. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.97.

47. 'Extracts from "The war and South Africa" by J. Morkel, a report delivered at a conference of the Communist Party held on March 23 and 24, 1940', SACP, op. cit., p.149.

48. SAW, 17 April 1937.

49. Claudin, op. cit., p.294 passim.

50. Defenders of Stalin follow him in arguing that the moves taken by the Soviet Union, including the Pact with Hitler, were aimed at avoiding a united attack by capitalist countries on the Soviet Union, and that the Soviet Union was all the time preparing for an attack by Germany. See Reid, quoted in Black, *Stalinism in Britain*, p.121. Claudin, op. cit., p.298.; J Ellenstein, *The Stalin Phenomenon*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1976. pp.126-131. Stalin, however, was later to argue both that the invasion of the Soviet Union was unexpected, and that the war "from the very outset assumed the nature of an anti-Fascist war, a war of liberation...." Quoted in Black, op. cit., p.298. Krushev later argued that Stalin had received, but rejected, intelligence and other reports warning of a German invasion. See Black, op. cit., p.147.; also Ellenstein, op. cit.

51. **Guardian**, 8 September 1939.
52. **Inkululeko**, September 1939. In May 1940, **The Call** carried an article, describing how "The working class suffer most from these regulations." **The Call** was published by the "Liberal Studies Group". Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.537, state that it was a Party journal.
53. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.99.
54. SACP, op. cit, Introduction to Section 3, p.136.
55. 'Extracts from "The war and South Africa" by J. Morkel', loc. cit., p.150.
56. Ibid.
57. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.99.
58. See **Guardian**, 22 September 1939.
59. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.101.
60. See **Guardian**, 22 September 1939.
61. 'Extracts from "The war and South Africa" by J. Morkel', loc. cit., p.150.
62. The information is derived from an unpublished paper by A. Brooks, 'The Communist Party of South Africa between 1940 and 1950', ICS, London, 1970; M. Legassick, 'Class and nationalism in South African protest: The SACP and the "native republic" 1928-1934', Syracuse University, 1973.
63. See W. Knapp, **A History of War and Peace 1939-1965**, London, 1967, Cambridge University Press, pp.21-23.
64. 'Statement by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of South Africa', in the **Guardian**, 26 June 1941.
65. See Mokgatle, **The autobiography of an unknown South African**, pp.213 and 233.

66. Umteteli, 31 January 1942.
67. Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Social, Health and Economic Conditions of Urban Natives, the Smit Committee. See Davenport op. cit., p.240, Walshe, op. cit., p.270; also Xuma to Smit, 31 October 1942, in Xuma Papers, ABX 423110.
68. Walshe, op. cit. p.270.
69. Ibid.
70. Luckhardt and Wall, *Organise ... or starve!*, p.62.
71. *Guardian*, 4 June 1942.
72. See *Guardian*, 3 November 1942.
73. Ibid.
74. *Guardian*, 17 May 1940.
75. *Guardian*, 3 October 1940. Johanna Cornelius was a member of the CP and of the TLC executive at the time.
76. *Guardian*, 21 May 1941.
77. These remained a basis of tension. See note 83.
78. See *Guardian*, 24 July 1941; also A. Brookes, *The Communist Party of South Africa, 1940 to 1950*, unpublished dissertation, Sussex University, 1967, p.67.
79. Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.63.
80. Marks was Chairman of the AMWU; Ray Alexander was secretary of the FCWU.
81. See B. Hirson, 'The Reorganisation of African Trade Unions in Johannesburg', pp. 5-7. He was released in June 1941.
82. See *Guardian*, 4 December 1941; Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.117.
83. Eventually, these led to the formation of the PTU, and the expulsions from CNETU in 1945 and 1946. Before then, they had

been clearly expressed on policy on the war. **Inkululeko**, 11 April 1943, reported a resolution from the African Commercial and Distributive Workers' Union: "While paying tribute to the Red Army the resolution calls for no second front, but for the struggle in the democratic countries against the Governments of those countries." This was described by **Inkululeko** as a "Fascist-inspired resolution [which] is a blot on the name of the African Trade Union movement".

War Measure 145 was promulgated on 19 December 1942. The maximum penalty for taking part or instigating a strike was raised to five hundred pounds or three years imprisonment. A system of arbitration was introduced which represented a development of the legal/state framework through which unions were required to take up demands. See "'The Strike of African Workers and Compulsory Arbitration', statement by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, December 31, 1942', **SACP, South African Communists speak**, p.175.

84. **Guardian**, 22 February 1940. The Council of Action was attacked by the TLC leadership. It also suffered physical attacks by fascists. Sachs was beaten up at a *meeting called by the Council in Brixton*.

85. See **Guardian**, 29 March 1940; also Walker and Weinbren, *op. cit.*, pp.169 and 231.

86. **Guardian**, 7 August 1941.

87. **Guardian**, 20 March 1941.

88. *Ibid.*

89. See Stein, 'Black trade unionism during the second world war', p.2.

90. Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Social, Health and Economic Conditions of Urban Natives.
91. *Guardian*, 15 October 1942.
92. Stein, 'Black trade unionism', pp.2-3.
93. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.556.
94. See 'The Strike of African Workers and Compulsory Arbitration', loc. cit., p.175; also Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, p.734.
95. See Stein, 'Black trade unionism' p.4; see Xuma to Smuts, 29 December 1942, ABX422912.
96. Report of the Witwatersrand Mine Natives Wages Commission on the Renumeration and Conditions of Employment of Natives on Witwatersrand Gold Mines, U.G. 21/1944.
97. 'Extract from statement issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on May 25, 1942', SACP, op. cit., pp.172-3.
98. *Freedom*, April 1942. The quote is from the *Guardian*, 29 January 1942.
99. *Guardian*, 15 October 1942.
100. *Guardian*, 3 December 1942.
101. 'Dissolution of the Comintern - resolution passed by the Praesidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on May 15, 1943', SACP, op. cit., pp.177-180; and *Inkululeko*, 5 June 1943; see also 'Dissolution of the Comintern - statement issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of South Africa on June 3, 1943', SACP, op. cit., p.180. The dissolution of the Comintern and its impact on the CPSA will be discussed below.

102. *Guardian*, 4 February 1943.
103. See Appendix, *infra*.
104. '"The strike of African workers and compulsory arbitration", statement by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, December 31, 1942', SACP, *op. cit.*, p.175.
105. *Guardian*, 4 February 1943.
106. 'The strike of African workers and compulsory arbitration', *loc. cit.*, p.175.
107. *Freedom*, July 1942.
108. *Guardian*, 4 February 1943.
109. The same edition of the *Guardian*, 7 January 1943, reports that "The African Steel Workers Union supports the war and aims to prevent all strikes and stoppages" - a policy supported by the CP; and that Ray Alexander is playing a leading role in a campaign against War Measure 145, and for the right to strike.
110. *Guardian*, 21 January 1943.
111. *Guardian*, 7 January 1943. The *Guardian* suggested that Ossewabrandwag members were trying to incite a strike by steel workers. *Guardian*, 21 January 1943.
112. *Guardian*, 4 February 1943; *Inkululeko*, 20 June 1943; Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.113. In January 1943, there was a major strike at Dunlops in Durban. See *Guardian*, 7 January and 21 January 1943.
113. Figures from G. Clacke, 'The changing structure of industrial relations in South Africa', unpublished thesis, University of London, 1962.
114. D. Davis and R. Fine, 'Political strategies and the state:

some historical observations', **Journal of Southern African Studies**, Vol. 12, No. 1, October 1985.

115. See **Inkululeko**, 20 June 1943.

116. Brewing had been an explosive issue in the urban areas for some time. See **SAW**, 22 May 1937, for a report of the Johannesburg Municipality decision to set up municipal beer halls. The CP called for a boycott of the beer halls, and demanded the right to home brewing, under a quota. See Koch, "Without visible means of support", p.169. The **Guardian** 26 April 1945 reported that there were 33,000 arrests a week because of home-brewing.

117. See article by Josie Mpama, **SAW**, 8 May 1937: "The reason for brewing and sale is that the wages are so low."

118. One of the major immediate causes of the Vereeniging riots in 1937 had been "liquor raids". **Guardian**, 1 October 1937.

119. Mokonyane, **Lessons of Azikhwelwa**, p.23.

120. See **Inkululeko**, 14 August 1943.

121. Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.318.

122. **Bus Service Commission**, UG 31 of 1944, quoted in Mokonyane, op. cit., pp.24-25.

123. See **Inkululeko**, 25 November 1944, 9 December 1944, 19 December 1944, 10 March 1945.

124. Mokanyane, op. cit., p.25. At the 1945 conference of the Johannesburg District of the CP it was agreed that the "Johannesburg City Council ... took up a most helpful and progressive attitude." Proceedings of the Johannesburg District Annual Conference, March 1945., unpublished.

125. See Stadler, **The party system in South Africa**, pp.29, 31 passim.

126. Mokonyane, op. cit., p.31.
127. See Walshe, op. cit., p.395. By 1945, fully paid up membership was in the region of 4,000.
128. *Guardian*, 4 February 1943, report of CP conference; Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.113. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.540, put the membership in December 1943 at 1,500. According to SACP, op. cit., Editorial note, p.183, the membership "grew fourfold" between 1941 and 1943.
129. *Guardian*, 21 January 1943.
130. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.540. In the edition of 11 April 1943, *Inkululeko* quotes Colin Steyn against those who doubt the CP's contribution to the war effort. The Friends of the Soviet Union had been formed in 1931, during the third period ultra-leftist phase, attracting negligible support. It was resurrected, as part of the 7th Comintern Congress turn, enjoying the relative successes and failures of the turn generally. The CP never succeeded in winning affiliation to the FSU from the TLC. The main activity of the organisation was propaganda meetings, and these were sometimes addressed by trade unionists who had been sent by the FSU to the Soviet Union.
131. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.114.
132. See *ibid.*, p.114; SACP, op. cit., Editorial note, p.183.
133. Andrews, who rejoined the CP in 1938, was Chairman of the TLC; R.Fleet secretary of the Johannesburg Local TLC; Wolfson Vice-President of the Johannesburg Local; Weinberg Chairman of the Cape Town branch; Errol Shanley Secretary of the Durban TLC.
134. In 1941, Radebe became Secretary for Mines and in 1943,

Mofutsanyana became Secretary for Labour of the Transvaal ANC.

Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.95; also part of the AAC/ANC committee 1940.

135. As Walshe, op. cit., p.385, points out, "[t]he new constitution of 1943 had been designed in part to give effect to executive authority."

136. In June 1943, Xuma suspended leadership elections, and set up an interim committee to run the affairs of the Congress. The immediate reason was the factional division of the Congress. See Walshe, op. cit., p.391. Xuma suspended several leaders, after Calata was defeated as Provincial President in 1941 elections, and the new leadership under Pendla refused to accept national Congress policy. Calata was re-elected at the provincial congress of 1943. Ibid.

137. See *ibid.*, p.271.

138. See above, p.341.

139. This was a "Joint Declaration by the President [Roosevelt] and the Prime Minister [Churchill]" signed on 12 August 1941. It assumed a particular relevance for the national liberation struggle internationally, declaring "the right of all peoples to choose their own form of government". See Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, pp.87-90; also Knapp, A history of war and peace, pp.24-25.

140. See 'Africans' claims in South Africa, including "The Atlantic Charter from the standpoint of Africans within the Union of South Africa" and "Bill of rights", Adopted by the ANC Annual Conference', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.209 to 223.

141. See Walker, op. cit., p.726.

142. See Davenport, op. cit., p.240.

143. See Inkululeko, 24 April 1943. It reports the arrest of 12,000 within a ten-day period. The CP sent a telegram to the NRC, calling on the Councillors "to make immediate representations in order to stop this high handed procedure. Their telegram states that mass police raids of this type are a contradiction of South Africa's war aims - democracy and a better social order." The Party also called a mass protest meeting. See also *The Star*, 24 April 1943.

144. See Walker, op. cit., p.728.

145. No Sizwe, *One Azania, one nation*, p.55.

146. On 15 May 1943, Smuts announced that elections would be held on 7 July 1943. Roberts and Trollip, op. cit. p.149.

147. This was to be reflected in a sharply increased urban working class vote for the Nationalists in the 1943 elections. It was also demonstrated by the developments at Langlaagte, in January 1943, where it became clear that the OB had a real, albeit limited influence amongst white miners. See *Guardian* 21 January 1943.

148. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.110; see also Mokonyane, op. cit., pp.27-8.; and Inkululeko, 9 October 1943.

149. See Walshe, op. cit., p.391.

150. They included Oliver Tambo and M. Mbata. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol. 2, Introduction to Part Two, p.100.

151. Ibid., p.110.

152. Inkululeko, 9 October 1943.

153. See 'Manifesto of the African Democratic Party, September 26, 1943', in Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.394-396.

154. Ibid.

155. Inkululeko, 9 October 1943.

156. 'Manifesto of the ADP', loc. cit.

157. Mokonyane, op. cit., p.28.

According to Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.112, "[i]t continued to exist until about 1948, issuing statements, sponsoring some demonstrations, and taking part in the meetings of the AAC and the NEUM, but failed to make headway."

158. See 'Resolutions of the ANC Annual Conference, December 20-22, 1942', Resolution 29/42. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.203.

159. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.98, point out that "[t]he founders of the ANC Youth League were comparable in middle class status to the professional men who founded the ANC in 1912, although there were no professional churchmen among them." See 'Resolutions of the ANC Annual Conference, December 20-22, 1942', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.199, Resolution 4/42: The conference congratulated Xuma for having secured the "the co-operation and confidence of leaders of all shades - distinguished University Graduates, and the most noted professional men amongst the African people today [sic]."

160. "'Congress Youth League Manifesto". Issued by the Provisional Committee of the Congress Youth League, March 1944', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.304.

161. The influence of teachers had already been evident at the 1937 conference of the AAC. See '"Policy of the AAC". Statement issued by the Executive Committee of the AAC, December 1937', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.62.
162. See note 159 above.
163. Tambo, for example, was a member of the Johannesburg Joint Council.
164. See '"Congress Youth League Manifesto." Issued by the Provisional Committee of the Congress Youth League, March 1944', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.306.
165. 'Letter from the ANC Youth League (Transvaal) to the Secretary [Ruth First] of the Progressive Youth Council, March 16, 1945', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.316.
166. 'Letter on the Youth League, from A.P. Mda to G.M. Pitje, August 24, 1948', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.319.
167. 'Congress Youth League Manifesto', loc. cit, p.304.
168. Ibid, pp.304-306.
169. Ibid., p.305.
170. Ibid., p.308.
171. Quoted in Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.102.
172. Walshe, op. cit., p.352.
173. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.102.
174. 'Congress Youth League Manifesto', loc. cit. p.308.
175. Ibid., p.306.
176. See Tabata, op. cit., p.89; Karis and Carter, op. cit.,

Vol.2, p.109.

177. See Tabata, op. cit. His discussion under the heading "New Methods of Struggle" begins with a section on the struggle in the Transkei. The location of prominent AAC leader, Tsotsi, in the Transkei was reflected in the emphasis which he gave to the land question. "It is the land problem which is at the root of all the sufferings of the African people." See *Torch*, 24 October 1949. The emphasis was to be reflected in the Programme of the Unity Movement. See Tabata, op. cit., point 7, p.60. A special series in *Torch* on the Ten Point Programme repeated, in 1960, that "the land question forms the basis of the so-called "Black problem" in this country." *Torch*, 12 October 1960.

178. Prominent amongst these was Dr G.H. Gool.

179. See note 177 above.

180. Quoted in A.J. Southall, 'South African Trotskyism', mimeo.

181. See Tabata, op. cit., p.50; also '"A call to unity." Manifesto adopted by the National Executive of the AAC, August 26 1943', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.347-352.

182. See '"Draft Declaration of Unity" [including 10-point Programme]. Statement approved by the Continuation Committee of the Preliminary Unity Conference of Delegates from the AAC and the National Anti-C.A.D., December 17, 1943', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.352-7.

The NEUM was seen as a continuation of the organic unity represented by the AAC- a unity from which there had been a deviation. See '"A call to Unity"', loc. cit.

183. Letter ["on the Organisations of the African People"] from I.B. Tabata to Nelson Mandela, June 16, 1948', Karis and Carter,

op. cit., p.362.

184. G.H. Gool, 'Land and national oppression', Lecture delivered to the Society of Young Africa, Cape Town, 1954, p.10.

185. J. Blair, 'The NEUM/Unity Movement of South Africa', mimeo, p.2. See also K. Jordaan, 'The land question in South Africa' in **Points of view - being lectures delivered to the Cape Debating Society**, Vol.1, No.1, October 1959.

186. See Tabata, op. cit., pp.70-73.

187. Ibid.

188. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Intro. to Part Two. p.85.

189. See Tabata, op. cit., p.57.

190. The 'Bill of Rights', in **Africans' Claims in South Africa**, loc. cit., p.217, called for the extension of the vote to all adults, regardless of race. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.89, point out that on different occasions, Xuma still appeared to support a qualified franchise.

191. See **Proceedings of Johannesburg District Annual Conference of the CP**, March 1945, February 1944 Johannesburg Municipal Elections.

192. See B. Hirson, 'Prices, Homes and Transport', unpublished paper, p.32; Xuma Papers, ABX431123c; **Inkululeko**, 18 December 1943.

193. **Guardian**, 27 January 1944.

194. See **Inkululeko**, 29 April 1944 - expressions of support from Gosani (CNETU) and Xuma (ANC); 29 May 1944; **Guardian**, 25 May 1944. The Transvaal ANC conference in July 1944 adopted the slogan "Join Congress to end the Pass Laws." **Inkululeko**, 22 July

1944.

195. Ibid.

196. See *Inkululeko*, 4 October 1944; 24 November 1944; also Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa*, pp.132-133.

197. *Inkululeko*, 11 November 1944; also *Guardian*, 30 November 1944; *Inkululeko*, 25 November 1944. It reports, after the Newlands riots, that "the CP has issued an appeal to the African people not to be provoked into riots and disorders".

198. *Inkululeko*, 10 March 1945.

199. See below, p.391.

200. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, pp.115 and 129.

201. Ibid., p.115.

202. See Tabata, op. cit., p.61.

203. See above, p.366.

204. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Intro. to Part Two, p.90.

205. See ibid., p.99; *Inkululeko*, 22 July 1944.

206. Walshe, op. cit., p.346.

207. Quoted in Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.170.

208. See *Guardian*, 29 April 1943, on plans by Sachs to set up the National Labour Congress; 3 June 1943, on formation of new Militant Democratic Party, under Jessie Macpherson; 7 October 1943, on Socialist Party of SA (this was formed out of the Sachs plan).

209. See 'Statement of the Central Committee of the CP', in *Guardian*, 13 May 1943; 27 May 1943; 3 June 1943; 10 June 1943; 17 June 1943; *Inkululeko*, 11 April 1943; 5 June 1943.

210. See Roberts and Trollip, op. cit., p.149 passim.

211. See **Guardian**, 7 June 1945 and 14 June 1945.
212. See Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.548; also **Inkululeko**, 10 March 1945.
213. See p.359.
214. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Intro. to Part Two, p.114; Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.123.
215. **Guardian**, 25 October 1945.
216. **Guardian**, 14 February 1964; **Inkululeko**, 4 April 1946, First Issue, May 1946.
217. The SAIC had previously had some organisational contact with the NEUM. See telegram from SAIC secretary to Preliminary Unity Conference, in Tabata, op. cit., p.58. But the connection broke down because the SAIC would not accept the Ten Point Programme. Ibid., p.99; Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Intro. to Part Two, p.114.
218. 'Joint Declaration of Co-operation', signed by Drs Xuma, ANC; Dadoo, TIC; and Naicker, NIC on 9 March 1947.
219. **Inkululeko**, 28 July; 22 September; 15 October 1945; Walshe, op. cit., p.357.
220. **Inkululeko**, 14 January 1946.
221. 'What next?', published by the Cape Town Branch of the CP in 1946, laid out the Party programme agreed at the 1944 Party conference. See **The Guardian**, 4 January 1945.
222. See **Guardian**, 4 January 1945.
223. See **Socialist Action**, Vol.2. No.11, 1946.
224. **Guardian**, 4 January 1945. According to Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.122, the words came from Central Committee member H.J.

Simons.

225. **Freedom**, December 1945.

226. **Guardian**, 20 June 1946.

227. See p.367.

228. **Guardian**, 20 June 1946.

229. Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.333.

230. Andrews, **Class struggles in South Africa**, p.54.

231. **Inkululeko**, 14 April 1945. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.124.

232. See above, p.361 ff.

233. See SACP, op. cit., Editorial note, p.191: "The Communist Party entered the post-war era at a peak in its development and influence. More members had entered its ranks and its newspapers enjoyed a greater readership than ever before."

234. Benson, **The struggle for a birthright**, p.105.

235. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.131.

236. See **Inkululeko**, 8 September 1945; **Guardian**, 13 September 1945. After the expulsions, **Inkululeko** complained when the PTU led a strike of timber workers, without requesting the help of CNETU or the TLC. **Inkululeko**, 28 January 1946. **Inkululeko**, First Issue June 1946.

237. D. Harries, 'Daniel Koza: Trade Unionist', **African Perspective** No 19, 1981., p.33. Makabeni later returned to CNETU and regained the leadership of what was a greatly weakened organisation.

238. See D. Harries, op. cit. p.25.

239. **Inkululeko**, July 1946.

240. Transcript of 'Rex v J.B. Marks and 51 others' (September 1946), p88. Quoted in Stein, op. cit., p.5.

241. Ibid. For the Power Workers (VFP) strike, see *Guardian*, 27 January 1944, and *Socialist Action*, June 1945.
242. *Guardian*, 4 July 1946. The strike developed without the knowledge of the Union.
243. See *Guardian*, 17 May 1946 for a report of the AMWU conference.
244. Figures released by the Director of Native Labour give the total number of strikers as 73,557. Cited in Bunting, Moses Kotane, p.133.
245. The impact of this regimentation is that each aspect of every day life raises a potential source of conflict with employers. In the period before the strike, the issue of food on the mines was the cause of conflict on several mines. See *Inkululeko*, 11 March 1946, and *Guardian*, 26 July 1945.
246. See Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.572.
247. See *Inkululeko*, August 1946.
248. *Guardian*, 12 August 1946.
249. Ibid.
250. Ibid., 15 August 1946.
251. Ibid., 22 August 1946. See also *Inkululeko*, First Issue August 1946. Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.340, quotes the *Cape Argus* of Wednesday 14 August as saying that the strike call was operative only "if the Chamber of Mines was not prepared to open negotiation by [Wednesday 14]".
252. *Guardian* 22 August 1946.
253. *Strike Bulletin*, No.3, 14 August 1946.
254. *Strike Bulletin*, No.4, 15 August 1946

255. See **Guardian**, 22 August 1946.
256. **Strike Bulletin**, No.4, 15 August 1946.
257. **Guardian**, 29 August 1946.
258. The May conference decided on a strike, unless the Chamber agreed to the demand for 10/- per day. **Guardian**, 2 May 1946.
- 259. *Ibid.*, 23 May 1946.
260. See Notes to Chapter Six, note 31 below
261. **Strike Bulletin**, No.3, 14 August 1946.
262. Benson, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.
263. Simons and Simons, *op. cit.*, p.578. The suggestion that Koza and Makabeni proposed its dissolution has been rejected by James Phillips, the Chairman of the Strike Committee, in an interview with Baruch Hirson. **Strike Bulletin** No. 4, 15 August 1946 announced that the meeting had been called.
264. **Inkululeko**, First Issue, July 1947. The CP only criticised Xuma openly on this issue after antagonisms had developed with him over his "sabotage" of the Anti-Pass Campaign.
265. See Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.133.
266. Luckhardt and Wall, *op. cit.*, p.70.
267. **Guardian**, 22 August 1946.
268. See Luckhardt and Wall, *op. cit.*, p.70.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. On the NRC see M.Ballinger, **From Union to Apartheid**, Bailey Bros and Swinfen, 1969.
2. Luthuli, **Let my people go**, p.92. 'Report of a deputation from the ANC to the Deputy Prime Minister and Others on March 4, 1942, by Dr. A.B. Xuma [n.d.]', Karis and Carter, **From protest to challenge**, Vol.2, pp.188-198.
3. This was later to become a major issue in the relationship between the CYL and the CP. It was also the central criterion in terms of which they switched support from Xuma to Moroka.
4. See Tabata, **The awakening of a people**, p.90.
5. See A. Luthuli, **Let My People Go**, Glasgow, Collins, 1962, pp.92-93.
6. A.B. Xuma Papers, ABX642607.
7. Luthuli, op. cit., p.93.
8. See Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.94; also Tabata, op. cit., p.102; Luthuli, op. cit., p.94.
9. See **Inkululeko**, First Issue, October 1946; Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.95; also Tabata, op. cit., p.104.
10. **Guardian**, 10 October 1946, and 17 October 1946; Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Introduction to Part Two, p.95; Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.135 passim.
11. 'Resolutions of the ANC Annual Conference, December 14-17, 1946', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.263-266; Resolutions No's 6 and 8.
12. **Guardian**, 9 January 1947.

13. 'Resolutions of the ANC Annual Conference, 1946', loc. cit., No's 3,4,5,6.
14. Walshe, *The rise of African nationalism*, p.331; calling the resolutions collectively the "minimum programme" probably reflects the tension between the ANC and the NEUM.
15. See 'Resolutions of the ANC Annual Conference, 1946', loc. cit., Resolution No.9.
16. *Inkululeko*, October 1946. The Passive Resistance Campaign had been set up in opposition to the "Ghetto Bill". See *Guardian*, 14 February 1946; *Inkululeko*, 4 April 1946 and First Issue, May 1946; also Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.129 passim.
17. See *Inkululeko*, November 1946.
18. 'Minutes of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, February 1-2, 1947', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.266-271.
19. Joint Declaration of Co-operation. Statement by Dr A.B. Xuma of the ANC, Dr G.M. Naicker of the Natal Indian Congress, and Dr Y.M. Dadoo of the Transvaal Indian Congress, 9 March 1947.
20. See 'Report of interview by some NRC members with Prime Minister Jan C. Smuts; Verbatim report of the proceedings; Press conference remarks by Paul R. Mosaka and Professor Z.K. Matthews; and statement by Professor Matthews, May 8-9, 1947', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2., pp.233-257; also Tabata, op. cit., p.107.
21. *Umteteli*, 16 August 1947.
22. See *Guardian*, 18 December 1947, and 25 December 1947; Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.124, 168, 298; Tabata, op. cit., p.109; Walshe, op. cit., p.358; Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.137

passim.

23. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Intro. to Part Two, p.98.

24. 'Resolution on "The Struggle for Democracy" adopted at the national conference of the Communist Party held in Johannesburg on January 2,3 and4, 1948', SACP, **South African Communists speak**, p.196; See also **Guardian**, 8 January 1948.

25. **Inkululeko**, 14 January 1946.

26. **Inkululeko**, First issue, June 1946.

27. **Inkululeko**, 22 September 1945.

28. See 'Congress Youth League Manifesto', loc. cit., p.300.

29. Of 12 leading CYL members, one was a trade unionist (Dan Tloome); one was a medical student (W. Nkomo); two were teachers (J.C.M. Mbata and Robert Sobukwe); four were lawyers (A. Lembede, N. Mandela, Duma Nokwe, Joe Matthews) and four were teachers and lawyers (O. Tambo, A.P. Mda, V. Mbobo, G. Pitje). Sobukwe later qualified as a lawyer. Thus 10 of the 12 were teachers and/or lawyers.

30. See **Inkululeko**, First Issue, July 1947; also 'Resolutions of the ANC Annual Conference, December 14-17, 1946', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Resolution 12, p.265. It declared: "Conference is deeply dissatisfied with the manner in which the Anti-Pass Campaign has been conducted, and expresses no confidence in the National Anti-Pass Council and the Action Committee of that Council". The minutes do not record who proposed the resolution. The same conference reiterated "its pronouncement of full and complete confidence in Dr. A.B. Xuma as its President General". Ibid., Resolution 1, p.140.

31. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, pp.137-140.
32. See Walshe, *op. cit.*, p.358. He cites the minutes of the 1947 conference as a reference.
33. **Guardian**, 8 January 1948.
34. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, pp.138-9.
35. **Freedom**, Summer, 1947/48.
36. See above, p.264.
37. CNETU seems to have been in decline from 1945. The 1945 and 1946 conferences seem to have been dominated by divisions. The expulsions and splits in 1945, 1946 and 1947 were symptomatic of, and promoted, that decline. The impact of the defeat of the miners' strike promoted the same result.
38. See **Guardian**, 22 December 1949. Xuma later claimed that the CYL had offered to support him provided that he supported a boycott. "I do not want to be dictated to.... I want to remain a leader with freedom of thought and discretion, to deal with situations as dictated by circumstances". **Guardian**, 23 March 1950, announcing his resignation from the ANC Executive.
39. "Basic Policy of Congress Youth League." Manifesto issued by the National Executive Committee of the ANC Youth League, 1948', Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, Vol.2, p.330.
40. See **Guardian**, 8 April 1948; also Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, pp.151-152.
41. **Inkululeko**, June 1948.
42. **Guardian**, 19 July 1948.
43. **Rand Daily Mail**, 14 August 1946.
44. **Freedom**, April 1947.
45. **Star**, 14 August 1946.

46. Luckhardt and Wall, *op. cit.*, p.80.
47. Following the defeat of the 1922 strike, trade union membership fell from over 113,000 in 1919 to 67,000 in 1926. By 1934, the figure had increased to 89,000. Between 1933 and 1937, the figure increased by more than 100,000 and in 1942, it stood at more than 250,000 (all registered union membership figures). O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.80.
48. *Ibid.*
49. Stultz, *Afrikaner politics in South Africa*, p.94.
50. *Population Census 1946*, Pretoria, UG41/1954, Vol.IV, Table 14, p.54.
51. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.221.
52. O'Meara, 'Analysing Afrikaner nationalism', p.49.
53. Bill Andrews is an interesting example. The point is not that place of birth determines qualities as a trade union leader, but that the Nationalists could try to exploit the fact that trade union leaders were "foreigners", who did not care about Afrikaners.
54. In 1924, 9 of 18 LP MP's had been born in Britain; in 1929 6 out of 8; in 1933 all 4; in 1943 4 out of 8. See Stadler, *The party system in South Africa*, Table 1.1. and Table IV (i), p221.
55. See above, p.212.
56. For an outline of Afrikaner entrepreneurial schemes see O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, pp.155-163.
57. Between 1939 and 1948 the number of Afrikaans teachers increased by 68%. In the same period, the proportion of white teachers who were Afrikaners rose from 49% to 61%. *Ibid.*, p.221.

58. The anti-war policy of the Afrikaner Party was "somewhat modified" in 1942. "There was still no weakening in their opposition to the war, but they were now prepared not only to concede the sincerity and even the patriotism (misguided though it might be) of those who supported the war, but also to promise to put no obstacles in the way of the government in the execution of its policy." Roberts and Trollip, *The South African opposition*, p.129.

59. Kruger, *The making of a nation*, p.205.

60. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.122.

61. See Roberts and Trollip, *op. cit.*, p.4 *passim*, for a description of the process of hereniging.

62. *Ibid.*, p.125 *passim*.

63. See Kruger, *The Making of a nation*, pp.212-216.

64. See Roberts and Trollip, *op. cit.*, pp.133 *passim* and 148 *passim*.

65. *Ibid.*, p.158.

66. Stadler, *op. cit.*, Table 1.4, 8, 9 and 13.

67. Quoted from *Die Kruithoring* in the *Guardian* 18 November 1943. Nor was the target of the Nationalists only Afrikaans workers. In the *Guardian* of 16 December 1943, P.W. Botha, then Secretary of the Cape HNP is quoted as saying that "the English-speaking worker must be brought to realise that his problems and needs are the same as the Afrikaans-speaking worker."

68. *Guardian*, 16 December 1943.

69. See the *Guardian* 14 September 1942; 21 January 1943; 28 January 1943; 18 March 1943; 1 April 1943. O'Meara, *op. cit.*, p.86, points out that there are not reliable membership figures

for the OB. Moodie has suggested that the OB was instrumental in regenerating the Hervormers. T.D. Moodie, *The rise of Afrikanerdom: power, apartheid, and the Afrikaner*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1975. pp. 232-233. Clearly, the CP believed that the OB had a significant, although numerically small location amongst white miners.

70. See Moodie, op. cit., p.254.

71. See O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, pp.91-94.

72. O'Meara, 'Analysing Afrikaner nationalism', pp.66 and 68. See above, p.281.

73. See Walker and Weinbren, *2000 casualties*, p.218 passim.

74. Simons and Simons, *Class and colour in South Africa*, p.567.

75. *Guardian*, 16 December 1943 and 6 January 1944.

76. *Guardian*, 6 January 1944.

77. See *Guardian*, 23 March 1944. Broderick announced that returns so far indicated 97% in favour of a strike. "This is the straight, unbiased opinion of the rank-and-file. We have had no meetings and no propaganda (sic). We do not even warn the men when they will be called on to vote." (sic)

78. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.93.

79. One such example was M.J. Van den Berg, a one-time organiser for the MWU. He crossed the floor while an LP MP, and later became Chairman of a Committee dealing with trade union legislation. Walker and Weinbren, op. cit. p327.

80. See *Guardian*, 9 May 1946; *Inkululeko* May 1946, first and second issues. See also *The Crisis in the Labour Party*, Statement by the Central Committee of the CPSA, in *Freedom* June-July, 1946.

The Statement argued, inter alia, that "because of its claim to be a socialist party and to represent the interests of the workers of South Africa, the SALP must be considered as an important section of the SA working class movement." The Statement also said that "the SALP is still a political party devoted to maintaining the privileged position of Europeans in South Africa, and which can in no sense justify its claim to be a socialist party." A Central Committee Resolution had meanwhile declared that the LP "must be regarded as enemies of the working people, who must be exposed and driven out of the Labour Movement. *Inkululeko*, First Issue, May 1946.

81. Madeley took a fourth option and sat as an Independent. Stultz, op. cit., p.115.

82. The Bill sought to make strikes illegal and a criminal offence in a number of key industries. It was referred to an Industrial Legislative Commission (the Botha Commission) by the new Nationalist government. *The Botha Commission 1948-1951*, unpublished, mimeo.

83. See *Guardian*, 21 March 1946.

84. See *Guardian*, 30 January 1947 and 13 February 1947.

85. See *Guardian*, 21 March 1946; also Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.220.

86. *Guardian*, 30 January, 1947; Weinbren, op. cit., p.200.

87. There were three major factors involved in this: differing opinions about whether and how to support the war effort; differing approaches to the question of the organisation of black workers and non-racial unionism; and differences over conditions for remaining within the TLC. The different positions on these

issues did not divide into a left/right division. See, inter alia, **Guardian**, 27 February 1937 which reports that the GWU has disaffiliated from the TLC, and **Freedom**, 1943, criticising Sachs for walking out of the TLC conference.

88. See **Guardian**, 25 April 1946. The motion was lost by 41/44. This was confirmed by a card vote.

89. See Lewis, **Industrialisation and trade union organisation**, p.164.

90. In the **Guardian** of 26 October 1944, a report on food shortages replaces the normal reports on the military developments of the war as the front page lead article. The **Guardian** of 26 July 1945 announces a campaign by the AMWU against ration cuts. See also D.J. du Plessis in **Inkululeko**, 21 January 1946; **Inkululeko**, 11 March 1946, which reports on food riots in Benoni; and the Second Issue of May 1946 which reports government rationing plans.

91. **Guardian**, 10 January 1946.

92. See **Guardian**, 7 February 1946, which reports that "TLC leaders are not pressing for a general strike"; and 14 February 1946 which refers to "what can only be described as sabotage on the part of certain top leaders of the SATLC". The article attacked the Secretary (de Vries) and the President (Downes) in particular. The leadership of the MWU refused to hold a ballot. The **Guardian** of 28 February reports that the FCWU has voted for a strike. After that there are no further reports of the TLC campaign.

93. **Guardian**, 14 February 1946

94. **Guardian**, 14 April 1946.
95. **Guardian**, 30 January 1947.
96. **Guardian**, 10 April 1947.
97. See **Guardian**, 7 August 1947, and succeeding issues; also Lewis, op. cit., p.162.
98. **Strike Bulletin**, Wednesday 6 August 1947. "At a meeting of the National Executive of the TLC it was unanimously agreed 'to give full full financial and moral support to the building workers now out on strike.'"
99. See Memorandum submitted to the South African Trades and Labour Council Commission of Enquiry into the Building Strike, Southern Transvaal Local Committee of the SATLC, 20 January 1948, mimeo; also Report on the meeting of the building workers of the East Rand held at the Benoni Town Hall, Saturday 30 August 1947, mimeo.
100. Southern Transvaal TLC Memorandum.
101. Ibid.
102. See **Guardian**, 2 October 1947. The strike was scheduled for 9 October, more than two months after the building workers' strike had begun.
103. Southern Transvaal TLC Memorandum p.2.
104. See Lewis, op. cit., p.162.
105. See **Guardian**, 7 August 1947.
106. Quoted in Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.80.
107. **Guardian**, 16 October 1947.
108. **Guardian**, 1 April 1948.
109. Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.82.
110. **Guardian**, 1 April 1948.

111. *Guardian*, 2 September 1948.
112. *Guardian*, 18 April 1949.
113. *Guardian*, 17 April 1950.
114. The Nationalists won 8 seats on the Witwatersrand and 5 in Pretoria. Stultz, op. cit., p.143; Davenport, op. cit., p.411. Three Native Representatives, 6 LP, 65 UP, 9 AP, 70 NP; Walker, *A history of Southern Africa*, pp.772-3.
115. See M.C. O'Dowd, 'South Africa in the light of the stages of economic growth' and N. Bromberger, 'Economic growth and political change', both in A. Leftwich (Ed), *Economic growth and social change in South Africa*, London, Allison and Busby, 1974.
116. See Johnstone, *Class, race and gold*; M. Legassick, 'South Africa, capital accumulation and violence', *Economy and Society*, 3, 1974; H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour power in South Africa', *Economy and Society*, 1, 1972.
117. Ibid. For a critique of Wolpe, see D. Posel, 'Rethinking the race-class debate in South African historiography', *Social Dynamics*, Vol.9, No.1, 1983. Posel captures parts of the reductionist methodology of Wolpe, but does so through a perspective in which the analytical category 'class' is generically reduced to an idealised descriptive category. Race and class are made **generically** similar, although with descriptive differences.
118. Wolpe, op. cit., pp.432-4.
119. Wolpe identifies two alternatives for the "Afrikaner working class": "face a cut in wages and the threat of unemployment; or support attempts to assert control over the African and other non-white people by whatever means were necessary". Ibid.,

pp.446-7. The possibility of any form of resistance or alliance which hit at capitalist profits appears to be completely precluded, without an explanation of why this is the case.

120. Lewis, op. cit., p.162.

121. D. Davis and R. Fine have taken up the functionalist determinism of this approach in the work of Wolpe generally. See 'Legality and Illegality in South African Class Struggles: Case Studies in the 1940's and 1950's', unpublished paper. The ideas expressed in this paper are reflected also in D. Davis and R. Fine, 'Political strategies and the state: Some historical observations', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, October 1985, pp.28-29.

122. The support of Anglo-American, for example, for the UP is reflected in the fact that Oppenheimer was a UP MP.

123. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, p.242.

124. See *Guardian*, 13 May 1943.

125. Nine candidates stood for the CP. See *Guardian*, 10 June 1943.

126. *Guardian*, 27 May 1943.

127. *Guardian*, 17 June 1943.

128. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.149.

129. The Party often used the term "Malanazi", to make the connection. Its reaction to the election came in a pamphlet under the heading "Malanazi Menace". See Lerumo, op. cit., p.87. A major CP protest meeting after the election was held under the slogan "Smash Fascism - Defeat Malan". *Guardian*, 27 January 1949.

130. *Guardian*, 28 April 1948.

131. *Guardian*, 20 May 1948.
132. *Ibid.*
133. Lerumo, *op. cit.*, p.88.
134. 'The Lessons of the Election Result', statement by the Central Committee of the CP, in the *Guardian*, 3 June 1948.
135. See above, p.356.
136. *Guardian*, 3 June 1948.
137. *Guardian*, 11 May 1950; see also *Freedom*, 11 October 1948, 'Ruling class conflict in South Africa'; and 15 May 1950, 'Smuts' new policy', on Oppenheimer.
138. Molema Papers, Minutes of the 1949 ANC Conference.
139. *Freedom-Vryheid*, November/December 1947.
140. *Inkululeko*, June 1948.
141. *Guardian*, 17 November, 1949.
142. Associated with these two tendencies were conflicting views as to whether an extension of democracy from the starting point of a UP, or any white government was possible or not. See B. Turok, 'South Africa: The Violent Alternative', *Socialist Register*, 1972, Merlin Press, London, pp.265-266. Turok makes the point in order to support a fundamentally different conclusion to that of this study. He is critical of the Party's tendency to stray from a recognition that fascism exists.
143. *Freedom*, 11 October 1948. See also *Guardian*, 26 April 1951. "[T]he policy of apartheid runs counter to the needs of an expanding industrial economy, as Dr. Jansen realised when he said in 1948 that is apartheid clashed with industry, industry would just have to suffer."

144. *Guardian*, 3 June 1948.
145. Lerumo, op. cit., p.91.
146. Bunting, *The rise of the South African Reich*, p.121.
147. The Asiatic Laws Amendment Act withdrew the limited franchise which Indians had already rejected. Bunting, *The rise of the South African Reich*, p.124; Walker, op. cit., p.778.
148. *Report of the Dept of Native Affairs 1948/1949*, p.25; Walker, op. cit., p.781.
149. Legassick , 'Legislation, ideology and economy in post-1948 South Africa', p.18; Simons and Simons, op. cit., p. 596; see *Freedom*, 4 April 1949, 13 June 1949.
150. This has been done by such ideologues themselves. See Davenport, op. cit., p.253, discussing the view of De Wet Nel.
151. Oppenheimer was a leading example of the latter.
152. In June 1947 the Supreme Court upheld the decision of a lower court that the withdrawal of Dadoo's passport was unlawful. See Roux, *Time longer than rope*, p.379.
153. See Davenport, op. cit., p.260.; Walker, op. cit., p.818. *Freedom*, 1 January 1950, discusses an apparent division within the Nationalist coalition on the issue of the Coloured vote. The false conclusion was that the "future of the Nationalist government under the circumstances is very dark indeed - Mr. Havenga's stand on the Coloured vote has caused a very serious crisis in the ranks of the Nationalists themselves. The N.P. may yet split into two...." See *Guardian*, 18 January 1951, on resistance to the "Malan-Havenga pact on the Coloured vote".
154. See *Guardian*, 20 September 1951; Davenport, op. cit., p.261.
155. The fact that the Nationalist victory was unexpected, even

by the Nationalists, fuelled the view, especially in the early years of the first Malan government, that the electoral process could restore a UP government.

156. The appointment of an Afrikaner General, ahead of an English-speaking officer promoted fears of an Afrikanerisation of the Government services. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.137. The Ministry of Defence also raised the possibility of separate language army units. *Guardian*, 21 December 1950.

157. Davenport, op. cit., p.261; *Guardian*, 31 May 1951.

158. See *Freedom*, 15 May 1950; also Davenport, op. cit., pp.258 and 351. *Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 27, 1952-1953*, p98. Because of the existence of the Pass Laws and the Urban Areas Acts, the Group Areas Act was initially sometimes understood as affecting only Coloureds and Indians. See E. Feit, *African opposition in South Africa: The failure of passive resistance*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, p.101. It has come to be a central component of the broader legislative set of controls over the movement of Africans.

159. *Guardian*, 28 December 1950.

160. *Guardian*, 2 August 1951. Hertzog identified the GWU, BWIU and Johannesburg Transport Union as controlled by Communists.

161. On the struggle for control of the MWU see O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, pp.91-4.

162. See *Spark*, 14 March 1952; Bunting, *The rise of the South African Reich*, p.263.

163. Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.116. In terms of the Act blacks were permitted to perform skilled work only in black

areas.

164. See Legassick, 'Legislation, ideology and economy', p.13.

165. See E.S. Sachs, letter to P. Huyser dated 18 January 1950, mimeo; **Freedom** 15 March 1950; In 1951, Hertzog named the Building Workers' Industrial Union as one of those under Communist control. **Guardian**, 2 August 1951. The building industry unions, including the 'left' Building Workers' Industrial Union, opposed the Bill. **Guardian** 15 March 1951. According to Sachs, the "salient feature of your [Building Workers' Industrial Union] objection is the opposition of your Union to the training of natives altogether." See also Simons and Simons, op. cit. p.562; Walker, op. cit. p.816.

165. See **Guardian**, 26 April 1951. **Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa No. 27, 1952-1953**, pp.98-99.

166. The effect of The Training of Artisans Act and the Apprenticeship Amendment Act was to give the Minister of Labour wide powers over access to and conditions of apprenticeships.

167. **Guardian**, 26 April 1951.

168. Pretoria Co-ordinating Council, Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.82; **Guardian** 3 February 1949; **Forum**, 21 January 1950.

SA Federation of Trade Unions; **Guardian**, 9 November 1950, 8 November 1951, 27 December 1951.

169. See Lewis, op. cit., p.147.

170. Ibid., p.163. See below, p.317.

171. See Moodie, **The rise of Afrikanerdom**, pp.252-254.

172. Roux, **Time Longer than rope**, p.379.

173. [Erratum]

174. **Guardian**, 27 April 1950; Walker and Weinbren, op. cit.,

p.221.

175. Sachs was involved in a number of successful libel cases. See Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., pp 224-225.

176. See *Forum*, 25 February 1950.

177. See *Guardian*, 22 May 1952.

178. It is probable that they were dismissed, for a period, by the Nationalist movement, because they were women.

179. See Lewis, op. cit., pp.114-145. The left appears to have been more concerned to avoid splits than to take firm stands. See *Guardian*, 28 April 1949, report of 1949 conference. In the event, the tactic proved counter-productive.

180. See *Guardian* 22 June 1950; Lewis, op. cit., p.168.

181. Walker and Weinbren, op. cit., p.220; Bunting, *The rise of the South African Reich*, p.259; Simons and Simons, op. cit. p568.

182. Quoted in *Guardian*, 20 January 1949.

183. Simons and Simons, op. cit., p.595.

184. *Guardian*, 27 April 1950.

185. *Guardian*, 13 September 1951.

186. *Guardian*, 8 November 1951, 27 December 1951.

187. Ibid.

188. Ibid.

189. Die Burger responded to the go-slow which began in the telegraph section of the Post Office in December 1950 by writing: "It can not be permitted that the public's dependence on the performance of an essential service be misused in such a light-hearted fashion - for personal reasons." Quoted and translated in the *Guardian*, 21 December 1950.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1. *Guardian*, 23 January 1947.
2. *Guardian*, 19 January 1950; 2 February 1950; 16 February 1950; National Executive Committee Report to the 38th Annual Conference of the ANC, 15-17 December 1950, Molema Papers.; Sisulu on Newclare Riots, Molema Papers 32.; *Freedom* 1 March 1950. This wave of riots included the "race riots" in Durban in January 1949. African and Indian Communists played a leading role in combatting the racial antagonism, and the CP laid the blame for the riots on "low wages, unemployment, high cost of living, abominable living conditions." *Guardian*, 20 January 1949.
3. See *Guardian*, 28 April 1949; Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa*, pp. 52-4.
4. *Guardian*, 6 January 1949.
5. *Guardian*, 25 August 1949, 8 September 1949. The strike statistics were as follows:

1947	6,600
1948	2,500
1949	5,100
1950	2,900
1951	7,400
- Figures given in G. Clacke, 'The changing structure of industrial relations in South Africa', Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1962, Appendix C. The relatively low totals of strikers for some of this period is explained by the impact of the defeat of the miners' strike, and the weakening of the unions.
6. Dr. F.W. Fox, quoted in SAIRR memorandum to the Distribution

Costs Commission, quoted in R. Koen, 'A history of the African labour movement circa 1924-1946 with special reference to the 1946 African mineworkers strike', BA(Hons) dissertation, University of Cape Town, p.105.

7. SAIRR memorandum to Distribution Costs Commission, quoted in Koen, 'A history of the African labour movement', p.104.

8. *Forum*, 7 January 1950.

9. Report of the SAIRR, 1950, quoted in the *Guardian* 31 August 1950.

10. *Guardian*, 2 August 1951.

11. *Guardian*, 21 October 1948; *Freedom*, 13 September 1948, 1 November 1948.

12. *Guardian*, 28 June 1951. The demand was for three pounds a week.

13. *Freedom*, 1 April 1950, 8 August 1949.

14. Prominent ANC members from the Eastern Cape expressed their loyalty to the new Prime Minister. *Guardian*, 10 June 1948, 17 June 1948 and 23 December 1948. See '"Presidential Address" by the Rev. J.A. Calata, ANC (Cape), July 1948, Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p. 278. At the 1948 ANC conference there were demands for the expulsion of anyone participating in talks with the Nationalists. *Guardian*, 23 December 1948.

15. *Guardian*, 16 November 1950.

16. *African Lodestar*, June 1950.

17. 'Suggested programme of self-determination for the African people', H. Selby Msimang, 13 December 1949, Dr. S. M. Molema Papers, microfilm in Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, No.13.

18. **Inkululeko**, 15 November 1949.
19. Editorial Note, SACP, op. cit., p.200.
20. **Guardian**, 18 November 1848.
21. 'Central Committee Statement read out in the House of Assembly, Cape Town, on June 20, 1950, by Communist MP Sam Khan', p.215.
22. 'Central Committee Statement', loc. cit., p.214.
23. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p168.
24. **Guardian**, 31 March 1949.
25. **Guardian**, 23 March 1950; Bunting, **Moses Kotane**,p.168.
26. **African Lodestar**, May 1950, July 1950; **Inkululeko**, 1 May 1950; **Guardian**, 4 May 1950.
27. **Guardian**, 11 May 1950; Luckhardt and Wall, op. cit., p.74 provide details of the Bill.
28. 'Resolution of the Central Committee', passed on 7 May 1950, in SACP, op. cit. p.213.
29. 'Central Committee statement', SACP, op. cit. p. 214.
30. Slovo, "South Africa -no middle road", p. 156.
31. SACP, 'The Road to South African Freedom', in SACP, op. cit. p.310.
32. **Freedom**, December 1945.
33. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.115. See J.P. Cannon, **Speeches for socialism**, New York, Pathfinder Press, 1971, p.123.
34. **Freedom**, December 1945.
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37. '"Nationalism and the class struggle", extract from Central Committee report to the national conference of the Communist

- Party in Johannesburg on January 6, 7 and 8, 1950', in SACP, op. cit., pp.200-212. See also 'Communism and African nationalism', *Freedom*, 8 August 1949.
38. See 'Programme of Action', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.339.
39. *Freedom*, 11 October 1948.
40. 'The lesson of the election result', *Guardian*, 3 June 1948.
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48. Editorial, *Inkundla ya Bantu*, 20 May 1950, in Karis and Carter, Vol. 3, p.441.
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51. *Freedom*, September-October 1947.
52. *Inkululeko*, 1 May 1950.
53. Ibid.
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55. Ibid., p.91.
56. Ibid.
57. 'Dissolution of the Comintern - ECCI statement', SACP, op. cit., p.175.
58. Ibid.

59. 'Dissolution of the Comintern' - CPSA statement in *Inkululeko*, 20 June 1943.
60. Ibid.
61. Lerumo, op. cit., p.91.
62. Ibid., p.96-7; Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.178.
63. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Intro. to Part Two, p.105.
64. *Guardian*, 16 June 1945.
65. *Guardian*, 18 December 1949.
66. See 'Minutes of the Annual Conference of the ANC, December 15-19, 1949', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, pp.288-300.
67. 'Draft Report of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, submitted to the Annual Conference, December 15-17, 1950', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.453.
68. Ibid., pp.454-5.
69. Ibid., p.455.
70. 'Report of the Joint Planning Council of the ANC and the SAIC', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.458. The members were Marks, Sisulu, Dadoo and Cachalia. This means that there were two Communists on the JPC.
71. *Guardian*, 10 April 1952; *Spark*, 11 April 1952, and '"April 6: People's Protest Day". Flyer issued by the ANC and the Transvaal Indian Congress', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.482.
72. Bunting, *The rise of the South African Reich*, pp.126 and 146.
73. *Guardian*, 5 April 1951.
74. *Guardian*, 28 June 1951.
75. Ibid.
76. *Guardian*, 11 October 1951.
77. *Guardian*, 3 April 1952.

78. **Guardian**, 8 May 1952, 15 May 1952 and 22 May 1952. This was the final issue of the **Guardian**, which was then banned. Also **Spark**, 9 May 1952.
79. Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.185.
80. See the pledge, quoted in Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Intro. to Part Three, p.418.
81. **Star**, 26 June 1950.
82. Roux, **Time longer than rope**, p.391.
83. See 'JPC Report', loc. cit.; Luthuli, op. cit., p.107.
84. 'Statement on violence in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth on October 18, by local ANC leaders, in the **Eastern Province Herald**, October 20, 1952', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, p.484. See Benson, op. cit., p.151; Luthuli, op. cit., p.113. The statement was printed in the **Forum**, October 1952. It was a call for a revival of the Cape liberal tradition, the repeal of the selected unjust laws, patience and restraint.
85. See Roux, **Time longer than rope**, pp.392-3. Duncan was not a signatory of the September statement.
86. See Lodge, op. cit., p.45; Benson, op. cit., p.151.
87. **Star**, 20 October, 1952, 10 November 1952, 11 November 1952.
88. Lodge, op. cit., p.45.
89. Davenport, op. cit., p.261.
90. **Guardian**, 27 December 1951; Luthuli, op. cit., p.102.
91. **Spark**, 29 February 1952.
92. **Guardian**, 21 December 1950, 16 August 1951; Bunting, **Moses Kotane**, p.180. The election results were suspended: Marks won a second election. The CYL did not support Selope Thema, who was

expelled.

93. Luthuli, op. cit., pp.100-101.

94. *Guardian*, 21 December 1950.

95. See 'Statement on violence in New Brighton', loc. cit.

96. See Benson, op. cit., p.152. Letele was an ANC leader in Kimberley.

97. Bunting, *Moses Kotane*, p.189. In February 1951 "Dr. Moroka said that he personally felt that it was giving too much honour to the Communists to say that the people would not stand up for their rights until a Communist came among them. Nor did he know that the Communists were so powerful that they could influence a capitalist like himself." *Guardian*, 15 February 1951.

98. Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.3, p.6.

99. *Spark*, 13 February 1953.

100. *Spark*, 27 February 1953.

101. Ibid.

102. Lerumo, op. cit., p.96.

103. Quoted in *Guardian*, 26 April 1951.

104. *Guardian*, 24 April 1952.

105. *Spark*, 14 March 1952.

106. *Spark*, 11 April 1952.

107. 'Draft report of the NEC of the ANC, December 1950', loc. cit.

108. See Mokgatle, op. cit., p.307.

109. See 'Resolutions of the ANC Conference 1946', Karis and Carter, op. cit., Vol.2, Resolutions 8 and 9, pp.264-5. These listed several demands including the abolition of the Pass laws and the recognition of trade unions and instructed the ANC

Executive "to provide a machinery for the carrying out and speeding up of the realisation of the Programme of Action set forth by means of setting up a Council of Action...."

110. Spark, 29 February 1952.

111. See Guardian, 21 December 1950, 13 September 1950 on Worcester; 31 August 1951 on Western Cape; 11 October 1951 on Western Areas.

112. See Guardian, 26 April 1951 on Langa; and 18 October 1951 on New Brighton.

113. See Guardian, 6 January 1949 on Moroka and Jabavu; 15 March 1951, on Alexandra; 28 April 1949 on New Brighton.

114. See p.193 above.

115. Luthuli, op. cit. p.113. He puts the ANC membership figure before the campaign as 7,000.

116. Lerumo, op. cit., p.96.

117. See p.131 above.

118. Bunting, Moses Kotane, pp.188-193.

119. Lerumo, op. cit., p.96.

120. Slovo, 'South Africa: no middle road', p.165.

121. B. Turok, 'South Africa: The violent alternative' in R. Miliband and J. Savile (Eds), *The Socialist Register*, London, Merlin, 1972, p.274.

122. Spark, 29 February 1952.

123. Spark, 28 March 1952.

124. Spark, 3 October 1952.

125. "The sun shall rise for the workers" is the title of the life story of Mandlenkosi Makhoba. The dream is the dream of

millions of ordinary workers - not just in South Africa, but wherever there is oppression and exploitation.

See Makhoba, M. *The sun shall rise for the workers*, Braamfontein, Ravan Press in association with FOSATU, 1984.

Statement by the Central Committee of the CPSA

(Printed in The Guardian, 22 October, 1942)

The steady rise in the cost of living is imposing an intolerable burden upon great numbers of low-paid workers. Their increased hardship has resulted in the outbreak of strikes in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, East London and Natal. Unless steps are taken to ease the position of the workers further strikes must be expected at a time when every effort should be made to expand production of essential goods to the utmost limits.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party believes that the war effort calls for the full and uninterrupted mobilisation of all labour resources, and that the working class as a whole is solid in its determination to take all the action necessary for the defeat of Hitlerism. Where sections of the working class resort to the strike weapon it is because conditions are forcing them to obtain relief from the crushing burden imposed upon them and no alternative means of gaining some improvement appears to be open to them.

A serious responsibility rests upon the Government and employers to remove the conditions that are driving workers to adopt measures injurious to the war effort. The many statements that have been made by Government spokesmen and industrial leaders on the need for social reconstruction after the War must surely be given a practical meaning for today, when it is of prime importance that all sections of the population should be drawn

together in a mighty struggle for victory.

General Smuts, who recently issued a warning that South Africa is heading for a severe test in the following year or two, has asked all classes in the community to cut down their requirements. The great bulk of the working class has already been compelled to do so by high prices and the scarcity of commodities. Every Government Commission that has investigated the question has stressed the appalling extent of the undernourishment that exists in the great majority of the population.

The workers cannot have their standards further reduced without disastrous consequences to their health, and therefore to South Africa's output. It is therefore for other classes in the community to make their contribution to the austerity campaign which the Prime Minister has demanded.

The Communist Party realises that in the present circumstances workers resort to the strike weapon only as a last remedy when all other attempts to obtain adjustment to their legitimate grievances have failed. It believes that the workers must make every effort, by arousing public opinion and developing all forms of pressure available, to obtain a satisfactory settlement, while avoiding any stoppage of work.

But co-operation requires good will on both sides. Where employers adopt stupid and provocative attitudes, where they

remain blind to the vital political issues that are at stake, when they put their own selfish interests before the national welfare arnd the needs of the war effort, it becomes extremely difficult for the workers' leaders to obviate the use of the strike weapon.

The Communist Party therefore appeals to the public as a whole to give its support to the workers who are negotiating wage increases that are not only just but essential in the circumstances created by low wages, the high cost of living and difficulty of obtaining essential supplies. Above all, it requests the Government to take immediate and effective action to prevent further increases in prices and to ensure by higher wages and cost of living allowances that the mass of poorly paid workers are relieved of the heavy burden of poverty which now rests upon them.

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